



Pittsfield (MA) Parks Department Scrapbooks

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Pittsfield Parks
Department
Scrapbook
1999



AWARDED BY:

The **Berkshire Eagle's**
Berkshires
Week

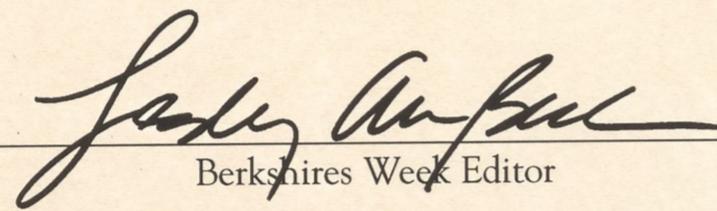
Congratulations to

Lake Onota

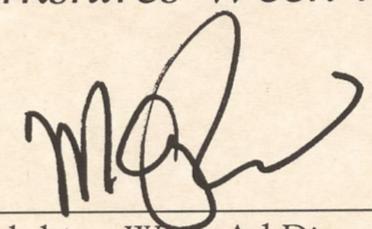
for being voted

Best Fishing Spot

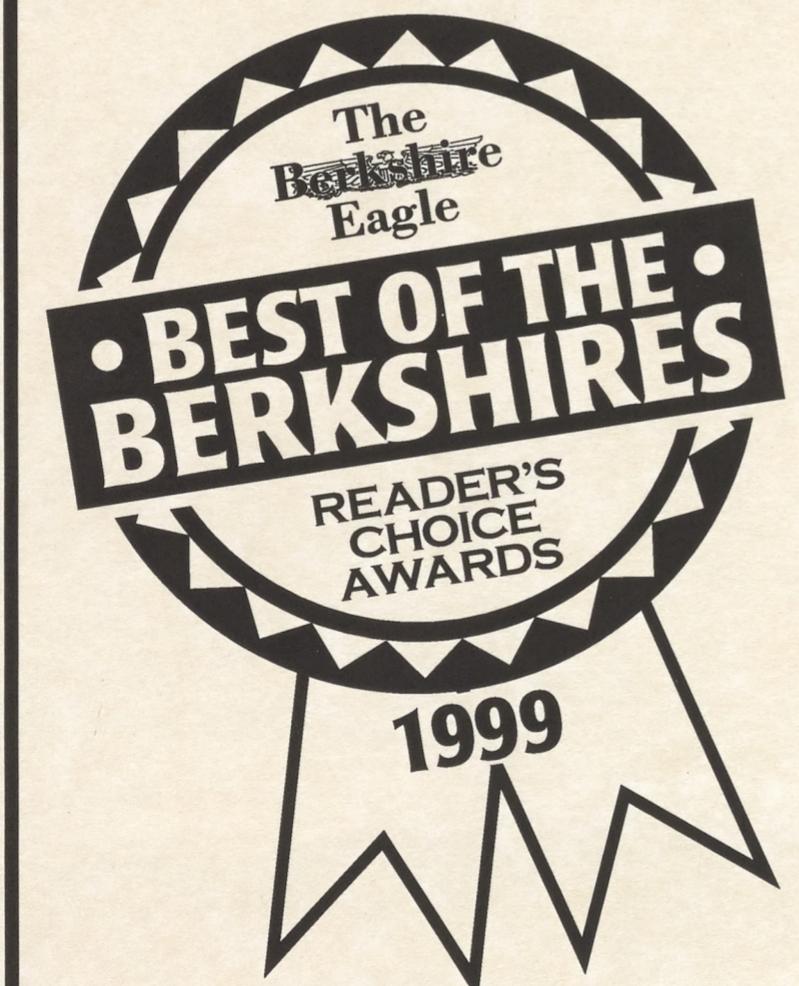
of 1999 by Berkshires Week readers



Berkshires Week Editor



Berkshires Week Ad Director



AWARDED BY:

The **Berkshire Eagle's**
Berkshires
Week

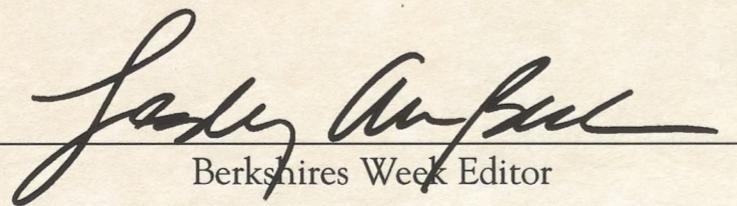
Congratulations to

Pittsfield Park Square

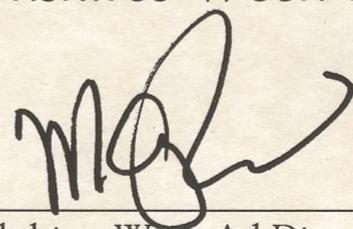
for being voted

Best Town Center

of 1999 by Berkshires Week readers



Berkshires Week Editor



Berkshires Week Ad Director



Skating coming to Clapp Park

Pittsfield Fire Department Capt. Bruce Kilmer, left, and Lt. Michael Aitken observe as Tim Hannigan sprays water from a fire truck at Clapp Park. If the weather cooperates skating at the park could begin soon.

Pittsfield speed skaters shine in N.Y.

Five members of the Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club were top three point winners at the Eastern States Long Track Championships Sunday in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Mary Lou DiNicola won the veteran women's class, winning the 500-, 800-, 1,000- and 1,500-meter races. Jaryn Pierson won the pony boys division with first-place finishes in the 100, 400, 500 and 250; Ed Basinski was second in the veteran men's division with second-place finishes in the 800 and 1,500 and third in the 500 and 1,000; and in the masters men, Mario DeBartolo was second with third-place finishes in the 500, 800, 1,000 and 1,500 and Vin Vallone was third overall with fourth-place finishes in the same four races.

1/14/99

Pittsfield speed skating event Saturday

The Pittsfield Parks Department will sponsor the Pittsfield Short Track Speed Skating Championships on Saturday, Feb. 13, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink in North Adams.

The races begin at noon.

2/12/99

The Pittsfield Gazette January 21, 1999

Winter carnival offers varied slate of seasonal activities

Instead of simply complaining about winter, why not celebrate it? The 54th annual winter carnival offers a chance to do just that, with events, winter sports and festivities designed to warm the heart.

The carnival, sponsored by the city's parks department and organized by a volunteer committee, spans most of January and February. Events are held at parks throughout the city and select other Berkshire sites.

Community services director Robert Mellace praised the many volunteers who make the event happen. "They put a lot of effort into this," he said. "The winter carnival wouldn't happen without them. We're always happy to give them support."

This year's queen will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship and the lady-in-waiting will get a \$500 scholarship.

A button design contest drew 50 entries from among local school children. The winning entry, which features a cheerful snowman, was designed by St. Mark middle school fifth grader Molly Murphy, who received a \$50 gift certificate.

Family Day, scheduled for Sunday, January 31 at Burbank Park, provides the winter carnival's showcase event. Last year, hundreds of families attended the outdoor celebration, which features sledding, skating and snowshoe races. Other activities include horseshoes on ice, kite flying, snow sculpture, ice fishing and ice golf.

If weather permits, the event will also feature tethered hot-air balloon rides for kids. Horse drawn hayrides will also be available. The Controy pavilion, heated with a wood stove, will allow winter revelers to warm up and get some refreshments.

Other scheduled carnival events include:

• Combine a little imagination with a lot of snow, and then dive right in. This year, the winter carnival features a home snow sculpture contest. Families or group of individuals



Horse-drawn winter hay rides are a winter carnival family day favorite. The carnival features a host of winter activities and events.



Horseshoes in winter? Unusual activities abound during winter carnival family day. This year's family day will be held on Sunday, January 31 at Burbank Park.

Annual Winterfest hosts blizzard of activities

By Stefanie Koperniak
Special to The Eagle

PITTSFIELD — Preparations are nearly complete for the third annual Winterfest. The event is sponsored by the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum in cooperation with the Pittsfield Parks Commission, the Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation, and Pittsfield Beautiful Inc.

Winterfest is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 30, from 11 to 3 at Springside Park. Most activities will first convene at Springside House on North Street, then spread throughout the park.

The event has been organized largely by the Springside Park Activities Committee, a subcommittee of the Vincent J. Hebert Arboretum Committee. The arboretum, still under development, was named in honor of the longtime Pittsfield Parks and Recreation commissioner at the first Winterfest in February 1997.

Kevin Phelps, Springside Park property manager and chairman of the activities committee, said organizers work on the event throughout most of the year.

"We usually start planning around October," said Phelps. "By now, we're all organized, and will probably have one more meeting."

Variety of activities

Winterfest will host a variety of outdoor activities. Participants can ski on cross country trails groomed by the Berkshire Snow Seekers Snowmobile Club, or take lessons in snowshoeing taught by Gayle Tardif-Raser. The park's pond will again be flooded for ice skating, weather permitting.

Phelps said a contest for snow creations, a well-received event last year, will be offered again, as well as a cardboard sled contest in which participants ride sleds they designed and decorated themselves.

Winterfest also will provide popular nature appreciation events including identification of trees and animal tracks.

Indoor events will include arts and crafts activities and storytelling with Bud Hoover.

New contests

Phelps said this year Winterfest will introduce a snowball contest, in which contestants

will throw snowballs through cardboard targets.

Another new element of Winterfest is the recently reactivated warming house that has not been used for 20 years.

Although Phelps acknowledged that several events rely upon the cooperation of the weather, he said Winterfest would take place regardless of weather conditions.

Robert S. Mellace, director of community service at the Pittsfield Parks Commission, said despite Springside Park's central location, it is a resource that is often "underutilized." He described Winterfest as an aspect of an ongoing program to promote the park to the public.

"This is just one part of our efforts to develop more activities to get more people to use the park," said Mellace.

Family outing



Photos by Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

The Halls, David and Marianne, took their children skating yesterday at the Common. Above, David gives 4-year-old Andrea a hand. Below, Marianne and Rebecca, 6, try the push-and-steer approach.



1/18/99



The 1999 Winter Carnival button will have this design by fifth-grader Molly Murphy.

St. Mark student is named winner of button contest

PITTSFIELD — Laurie A. Manegari, organizer of this year's Winter Carnival button design contest, has announced that Molly Murphy, a fifth-grader from St. Mark School, has won the 1999 Winter Carnival button design contest.

The button design, which depicts a snowman, was chosen from over 50 entries submitted to the Winter Sports Committee by children from the city's elementary, middle, and high schools.

Category winners were also chosen according to grade. The winners are as follows:

- Kindergarten through Grade 2 — Stephanie VanBramer, Conte Elementary School.
- Grades 3-5 — Patrick Walsh, St. Mark School.

Grades 6-8 — Jose Barnes, Reid Middle School.

Grades 9-12 — Adam Rousseau, Taconic High School.

The winning designer will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the Berkshire Mall as her prize at the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 27. Each category winner will receive a \$25 Berkshire Mall gift certificate at the meeting.

The contest is sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Service, Parks, and Recreation. Buttons are sold by contestants for Winter Carnival Queen, and proceeds help pay for carnival events. Buttons go on sale, Sunday, Jan. 24.

Snow sculptors to compete for carnival

PITTSFIELD — The 54th annual Pittsfield Winter Carnival is set to begin today with the introduction of a home snow sculpture contest.

Families or groups of individuals may construct a sculpture of snow and, upon its completion, notify the Pittsfield Parks Department. A judge will inspect and photograph the sculpture. Winners will be judged by the committee based on the photographs taken and will be announced at Family Day on Sunday, Jan. 31. The contest will continue through Jan. 30.

The Pittsfield Winter Carnival Queen Contest is open to girls ages 17 to 21 who live, attend school or work in Pittsfield and adjoining towns. The contest will culminate with the coronation ball, where the queen, lady-in-waiting and Miss Congeniality will be announced.

A special award also will be given to the top button sellers.

During the four-week contest, contestants will sell buttons designed especially for the contest for 50 cents each to raise money to support the Winter Carnival events. A minimum of 1,000 buttons must be sold to qualify each contestant to be judged for queen. A maximum of 16 girls may enter.

The contest will run from Sunday, Jan. 24, to Sunday, Feb. 21. The ball will be held Friday, Feb. 26, at the Itam Lodge starting at 9. Tickets are \$7.

A new event, snowmobile timed runs, will be held Jan. 24, with headquarters at the Controy Pavilion on Onota Lake. Snowmobiles will run one at a time along a straight-line course and will be timed to the nearest 1,000th of a second. There will be multiple runs, and classes and trophies will be awarded. A fee will be collected for each run.

Bogoggan races, with two,

three- and four-person categories for all ages are planned for Saturday, Jan. 30. The event site, depending on conditions, will be Osceola Park on Gale Avenue. If conditions are unfavorable, races will be held at Bousquet Ski Area. Entry is free and bogoggans will be supplied, though participants may bring their own.

Automobile ice time trials will feature a 1 to 1 1/2-mile slalom course set up on the frozen surface of Onota Lake at the Controy Pavilion. Trials are open to all licensed drivers with automobiles equipped with seat belts. Helmets also are required; loaners are available. The event is co-sanctioned by the Mohawk Hudson Region of the Sports Car Club of America. Entry fee is \$20 and drivers may enter more than one vehicle. Loaner cars may be available at an additional cost to cover fuel expenses. Trials will be held Feb. 13-14, with backup dates of Feb. 27-28. Registration will be at 9 a.m.; timed runs will start at 11.

"Anything Goes" sled races, open to all ages, will take place on Saturday, Feb. 20, at Clapp Park on West Housatonic Street. Registration will start at 11. Participants may bring anything to sled on, including cardboard boxes, snow tubes, sleds or other outrageous things.

For more information on events, call 499-9343, weekdays from 9 to 4.

Cross country ski races, open to all ages, will be held at Canterbury Farm Ski Touring Area on Fred Snow Road in Becket on Sunday, Feb. 7. Registration will begin at 9 a.m., with racing at 10.

Cross country ski races, open to all ages, will be held at Canterbury Farm Ski Touring Area on Fred Snow Road in Becket on Sunday, Feb. 7. Registration will begin at 9 a.m.

Pittsfield short track speed skating championships will be held at the Vietnam Veterans Skating Rink in North Adams. There will be an entry fee and entrants will become members of the Amateur Speed-skating

Warmth puts Winter Carnival on ice

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — An unusual spell of warmth and rain has put a significant damper on the winter recreation season, driving down skier visits and forcing the postponement of several Pittsfield Winter Carnival events.

Family Day, the carnival's premier event, has been pushed back two weeks to Feb. 14, Clark Nicholls, chairman of the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee, said yesterday.

It had been scheduled for Sunday.

The Osceola Park bogoggan races, which had been planned for Saturday, also have been postponed until

a suitable weekend has been forecast.

Suffice it to say the last few weeks haven't exactly been suitable.

"There's no question that rain is not an attractive time for skiers to come out here," said Catamount's Bill Gilbert. "If it would only stop raining, we'd have a normal winter."

What's 'normal'?

But what makes a "normal" winter in New England anyway?

Meteorologists like to say that "normal" is nonsensical when trying to describe the weather. The correct term is "average." And the "average"

in New England is more likely than not just a string of extremes canceling each other out.

Take January, for example. The month blew in with a spell of bitter cold that put a smile on only the most hardened winter-lover's face.

But the cold went away about mid-month, yielding a string of 12 straight days above freezing, topping out with a high of 48 degrees on the 18th and 56 degrees last Sunday, a temperature more than 20 degrees higher than one would expect.

The result? The month is just about "normal" in the temperature column.

WARMTH, continued on B4

Pittsfield speedskaters win N.Y. titles

Three members of the Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club earned first-place finishes at the Eastern States Short Track Speedskating Championships in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., last weekend.

Amanda Flynn was tops in the midget girls' class, winning the 333-, 444-, 500- and 777-meter events; Caroline Holland won the juvenile girls' title with victories in the 333 and 777 and seconds in the 500 and 611; and Mary Lou DiNicola captured the veterans' open class with wins in the 500, 777, 1,000 and 1,500.

Ed Basinski was second in the veterans' class with second-place finishes in the 500, 777, 1,000 and 1,500.

1/30/99

Winter Carnival ski meet Saturday

The Pittsfield Winter Carnival has scheduled its annual City Ski Meet Saturday at Bousquet Ski Area. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and continues until the start of the race at 10. There is no registration fee.

The short, open slalom race is open to area children ages 13 and under, and will have racer and non-racer categories divided by age and gender. Trophies will be awarded.

Information: 684-3050.

2/4/99

DiNicola, Amanda Flynn win Carnival skate titles

NORTH ADAMS — Mary Lou DiNicola and Amanda Flynn from the Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club earned first-place finishes yesterday at the Pittsfield Winter Carnival speed skating competition at Vietnam Veterans Rink in North Adams.

The Pittsfield club finished second to Bay State in the competition, which attracted nearly 70 skaters from New England, New York and New Jersey.

DiNicola swept all of her races to win the grand master women's division, while Flynn won the 777-, 500- and 333-meter events to capture the midget girls' division.

Among other Pittsfield team skaters, Ed Basinski took second in all his races to finish second in the veteran men's division. Caroline Holland did the same in the juvenile girls' division, Marjorie Cohan finished second to DiNicola in the grand masters women, Juraye Pierson was third in the masters women, Jaryn Pierson was third in pony boys and Briana Flynn was third in pony girls. Colin Flynn was fourth in pony boys and Tierra Peters fourth in pony girls.

Novice results were not available. 2/14/99

Family day postponed due to warmer weather

The Pittsfield Winter Carnival family day, scheduled for Sunday, has been postponed due to weather conditions. In fact, all carnival events scheduled for this weekend, including Saturday's toboggan races, have been postponed.

According to a statement from the winter carnival committee, family day — a winter extravaganza which traditionally draws hundreds to Burbank Park — will instead be held on Sunday, February 14.

Other events will be rescheduled when weather is suitable. "We are hoping to reschedule all aspects of the [carnival], possibly adding events," said Clark Nicholls, a committee member.

Nicholls added that the automobile ice time trials scheduled for February 13 & 14 are still on at this time.

Community services director Robert Mellace reported that most of the ice cover on Onota Lake, where several events are held, melted during a recent warm spell. In addition, the snow left on the ground is unsuitable for events such as snowshoeing and snow sculpturing. The city's parks department sponsors the winter carnival, which is organized by a volunteer committee.



Big steps

This group of youngsters took advantage of the perfect weather for activities in the snow yesterday at Springside Park in Pittsfield. From left, Michael Kosla, Patricia Aldrich, 10, and Levi Bissell, 8, all of Pittsfield, practice their snowshoeing maneuvers. The cold weather is expected to continue through today, with warmer temperatures expected tomorrow.

Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

1/31/99

N.Y. driver Arisoty fastest both days of ice trials

PITTSFIELD — Alex Arisoty from New York City posted the fastest times both days as Onota Lake hosted the Pittsfield Winter Carnival auto ice trials Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday's event over a 1.3-mile course attracted 45 entrants, while Sunday's competition over a 1-mile course drew 32 entries. The Mohawk Hudson Region of the Sports Car Club of America sanctioned and organized the competition, which was held on 13 inches of ice.

Arisoty won both days with his Auti 4000 Quattro with screws in the tires for traction. His best time in four runs Saturday was 2 minutes, 3.808 seconds. His top time in six runs Sunday was 1:40.976.

Top finishers in each class were as follows:

SATURDAY

Four wheel drive, unsteered: Jeff Denmeade, Bristol, Conn., Subaru Impreza, 3:03.30.

Front wheel drive: Eric Parham, W. Hartford, Conn., VW GTI, 2:30.798.

Front wheel drive, steered: Tim Mather, E. Hartford, Conn., Honda Civic LX, 2:30.094.

Front wheel drive, bolts & screws: Jim Moore, Granby, Conn., Nissan Sentra, 2:27.106.

Front engine, rear wheel drive: Chuck Cox, Cambridge, Mazda Miata, 2:58.379.

Front engine, rear wheel drive, bolts & screws: John Fairweather, Pittsfield, Chevy Camaro, 2:27.172.

Front engine, rear wheel drive, steered: Chuck Larson, BMW, 2:28.868.

Modified with screws & bolts: Bob Green, Skip Barber Driving School, Lakeville, Conn., open cockpit Formula Dodge, 2:07.048.

Rear engine, rear wheel drive: David Kosla, Pittsfield, Toyota MR2, 2:20.624.

SUNDAY

Four wheel drive, unsteered: Denmeade, 2:14.321.

Front engine, front wheel drive: Parham, 2:13.556.

Front engine, front wheel drive, bolts & screws: Kosla, 2:01.953.

Front wheel drive: Mather, Nissan Sentra, 2:11.648.

Front engine, front wheel drive, unsteered: John Groo, Hartford, Conn., 2:09.000, 2:15.927.

Front engine, rear wheel drive, unsteered: Cox, 2:34.303.

Front engine, rear wheel drive, bolts & screws: Fairweather, 2:14.810.

Front engine, rear wheel drive, steered: Anne O'Neil, Hinsdale, BMW, 2:18.266.

Rear engine, rear wheel drive: Steve Scott, Pittsfield, VW Beetle, 1:59.334.



Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle Staff

2/14/99

Speedskating lists novice finishers

The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club had several young skaters who earned top-five finishes in novice division races at the Pittsfield Winter Carnival races Saturday in North Adams. Their results were not available when meet results were published in Sunday's Eagle. Top finishers were as follows:

Kids Division: Mitchell St. John, 2nd in 222, 111, 333; Rayelle Pierson, 3rd in 222, 333.

Youth Division: Chris Dinan, 2nd in 222, 333, 500; 3rd in 444; Gabrielle Merchant, 3rd in 222, 4th in 333, 500; Charlotte Crane, 3rd in 333, 444, 500, 4th in 222; Nadia Garofalo, 5th in 222, 333, 444 and 500.

2/17/99

The form of a champion

Pittsfield's Mary Lou DiNicola, a longtime regional and national masters-division champion, maintains a lead over Liz Marchese as they round a bend during yesterday's Pittsfield Winter Carnival speed skating competition in North Adams. DiNicola won her division. Story, Page C3.

Speed skating club seeking new coach

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club is seeking a coach for the upcoming season. The club's indoor practice sessions are on Tuesday from 7:15 to 8:15 p.m. and on Sunday from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Pittsfield Boys' and Girls' Club. Anyone interested should call Pat Peaslee at 443-3466 or evenings to Marge Cohan at 442-5223.

9/11/99

Speedskating club to meet Tuesday

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club will hold its annual informational meeting this Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Springside House on North Street. The club will begin skating the week of Oct. 15 and will skate Sundays from 7:30-8:25 and Tuesdays from 6:25-7:25.

While the club supports a number of competitive skaters, it welcomes adult and child beginners interested in speedskating. The club requires skaters to wear

speedskates and helmets and recommends knee guards. Some children's size seasonal rentals are available. All those interested in participating in the 1999-2000 season should attend Tuesday's meeting.

Information: Marge Cohan at 442-5223 or Pat Peaslee at 443-3488.

The club is looking for a coach specifically interested in working with children. Individuals should call Cohan or Peaslee.

9/11/99

Family Day rescheduled for February 21

The annual Winter Carnival Family Day has been rescheduled for Sunday, February 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Clapp Park.

The event, originally planned for January 31 and then moved to February 14, has been postponed due to a lack of snow and ice at Onota Lake.

Organizers are now switching the event to Clapp Park on West Housatonic Street.

2/11/99

Speed skating continues in N. Adams

The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club will extend its skating season with ice time at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Rink in North Adams on Sunday nights from 7 to 8 p.m., beginning this weekend and continuing for 11 weekends.

Members and non-members can skate for a spring season rate of \$55 for adults and \$33 for children under 12. Individual lessons are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children.

Information: Marjorie Cohan, 442-5223.

4/19/99

Queen's ball scheduled for Itam Lodge Friday

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee will hold the Queen's Coronation

Carnival queen competition set to begin Sunday

PITTSFIELD — The 54th annual Winter Carnival Queen Contest will kick off this Sunday with a dinner at the Itam Lodge. Contestants and their mothers will be guests of the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc.

According to chairwoman Laurie A. Mantegari, following the dinner the 16 contestants will begin selling their required minimum of 1,000 Winter Carnival buttons in order to be eligible to contend for the title of 1999 Winter Carnival Queen.

The selection will be made Friday, Feb. 26, at the Queen's Coronation Ball, to be held at the Itam Lodge. Three judges will make their selections based on poise, appearance, personality, expression and understanding of the Winter Carnival activities.

The sale of buttons is a separate contest and has no bearing on the judging of the queen or lady-in-waiting.

This year the queen will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and the lady-in-waiting, a \$500 scholarship to the schools of their choice. The contestants who sell the most buttons will receive special award; contestants will also choose a Miss Congeniality.

Contestants are:

• **Heather A. Barry**, 18, daughter of Stephen and Marilyn Barry of Pittsfield, is a senior at St. Joseph Central High School. She is director of the Community Service Office, president of the student council and a captain of Model Congress. She has also participated in varsity soccer, skiing, and softball in which she is captain. In the community, Barry is a member of the Pittsfield Youth Commission, a mentor for the Cops and Kids Program, a cooking teacher at the CVC and secretary of Rotary Interact. A National Honor Society member, she was recently named the Springfield Union News Student of the week, and has also been named semifinalist in the National Coca-Cola scholarship search. Barry plans to pursue a career in business at Boston College. Barry Architects and Hand-Of-Man will sponsor her.

• **Sara R. Church**, 18, daughter of Thomas and Renee Church of Pittsfield, is a senior at Pittsfield High School where she is a member of the Peer Resource Team. She is a volunteer at Berkshire Medical Center and the Kids' Place, and is employed at East Street Video and Variety. She plans to attend Lesley College and major in social work.

• **Michele A. Croughwell**, 18, daughter of George and Shirley Croughwell of Pittsfield, is a freshman at Berkshire Community College. She is employed by CVS.

• **Natalka Gela**, 17, daughter of Dr. George Gela and Joanne Gela of Pittsfield, is a senior at Pittsfield High School where she is secretary of the Latin Club, a member of the chorus, a participant in the Math League, and a tutor. In the community, Gela is a member of Synkrony Orchestra at the Pittsfield Community Music School. She is a Ukrainian school teacher in Albany, N.Y., and a member of Plast (a Ukrainian youth organization). She plans to attend Ohio State University majoring in veterinary medicine.

• **Rebecca L. Hashim**, 17, daughter of James and Peggy Hashim of Pittsfield, is a senior at Taconic High School. She is involved in the student council, National Honor Society, yearbook, Latin Club, Chemistry Olympiad, Quiz Team, Travel Club, SADD and Pep Club. She is a member of the prom committee and the School Building Commission, and is chairwoman of a Crosby Elementary School tutoring program. She is captain of the track and field team and runs indoor track. In the community, she is involved with Pittsfield's Straubing, Germany, exchange program, New England Math League, Berkshire Youth United, softball for the Parks Department and is co-chairwoman of the Citizen Scholarship Foundation.

Hashim is a volunteer for Special Olympics, a candy stripper at Berkshire Medical Center and Bright Horizons Day Care Center. She has been accepted at the University of Pennsylvania, where she hopes to pursue a career in pediatric psychiatry.

• **Jennifer Ketchum**, 17, daughter of Henry and Abby Ketchum of Pittsfield, is a senior at Pittsfield High School where she is on the alpine ski team, diving team, and is captain of the gymnastics team. She has also been involved with the track team and musical productions at the school, and has been honored with a multiple year award in Who's Who Among American High School Students. Ketchum is a seven-year member of the concert band, and a first-year member of the jazz band. She is a 1996 graduate of the Massachusetts Junior Conservatory of Music. She was a lifeguard and swimming instructor at the Salvation Army Camp in Boston, Hollingsworth, Rock's Business Solutions and Abby's Daycare will sponsor Ketchum.

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• **Olivia J. Mars**, 17, is the daughter of Carolyn J. Clayton of Pittsfield and Daniel J. Mars. A senior at Pittsfield High School, she is vice president of SADD. She is on the volleyball team, and in the Pep and French clubs, select chorus, and Proteus (drama club). In the community, she is a member of the CYC Service Society, Cott Center, and instructs lifeguards at the YMCA and Berkshire West.

• **Sara McKinney**, 17, daughter of Bruce and Diane McKinney of Pittsfield, is a senior at Pittsfield High School where she is vice president of her class and treasurer of the student council. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is involved with the drama society, yearbook committee, diversity committee, and relationship committee. Moynihan and Kowalczyk P.C., Kowalczyk Construction and Rosanne M. Fien Photography will sponsor her.

• **Caribeth Murphy**, 17, daughter of Michele Drysgola and John P. Murphy Jr. of Pittsfield, is a senior at St. Joseph Central High School where she is captain of the cheerleading squad. In the community, she is an All-Star cheerleader at the Catholic Youth Center where she is also a Bantam cheering coach. Quality Printing will be her sponsor. She plans to attend Berkshire Community College in the fall majoring in elementary education.

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Rosanne M. Friet Photography

Queen contestants pose with the 1998 queen and lady-in-waiting. From left to right in bottom row are: Melissa Simonelli, 1998 queen Jacky Reynolds, 1998 lady-in-waiting Jennifer Cahill, and Olivia Mars. Top row: Anne

Riello, Heather Barry, Alison Shaffer, Rachael Plaine, Caribeth Murphy, Natalka Gela, Kristin Wiehl, Becky Hashim, Sara Church, Jennifer Ketchum, Lisa Southard, Michele Croughwell, Sara McKinney and Amanda Lee.

Bike and Ski, which is also her sponsor.

• **Anne Riello**, 17, is the daughter of Anthony and Christine Riello. A senior at Pittsfield High School, she is treasurer of Proteus and a member of the French Club. In the community, she is public relations officer to the Pittsfield Youth Commission, and teaches CCD at Mount Carmel Church. Riello is employed by Over the Rainbow Restaurant in Pittsfield. She plans to attend Emmanuel College in the fall where she will double major in political science and international relations.

• **Alison M. Shaffer**, 17, daughter of Anne Marie Shaffer of Pittsfield, is a senior at St. Joseph Central High School where she is a member of the National Honor Society and yearbook committee, diversity committee, and relationship committee. Moynihan and Kowalczyk P.C., Kowalczyk Construction and Rosanne M. Fien Photography will sponsor her.

• **Caribeth Murphy**, 17, daughter of Michele Drysgola and John P. Murphy Jr. of Pittsfield, is a senior at St. Joseph Central High School where she is captain of the cheerleading squad. In the community, she is an All-Star cheerleader at the Catholic Youth Center where she is also a Bantam cheering coach. Quality Printing will be her sponsor. She plans to attend Berkshire Community College in the fall majoring in elementary education.

• **Michele A. Croughwell**, 18, daughter of George and Shirley Croughwell of Pittsfield, is a freshman at Berkshire Community College. She is employed by CVS.

• **Natalka Gela**, 17, daughter of Dr. George Gela and Joanne Gela of Pittsfield, is a senior at Pittsfield High School where she is secretary of the Latin Club, a member of the chorus, a participant in the Math League, and a tutor. In the community, Gela is a member of Synkrony Orchestra at the Pittsfield Community Music School. She is a Ukrainian school teacher in Albany, N.Y., and a member of Plast (a Ukrainian youth organization). She plans to attend Ohio State University majoring in veterinary medicine.

• **Rebecca L. Hashim**, 17, daughter of James and Peggy Hashim of Pittsfield, is a senior at Taconic High School. She is involved in the student council, National Honor Society, yearbook, Latin Club, Chemistry Olympiad, Quiz Team, Travel Club, SADD and Pep Club. She is a member of the prom committee and the School Building Commission, and is chairwoman of a Crosby Elementary School tutoring program. She is captain of the track and field team and runs indoor track. In the community, she is involved with Pittsfield's Straubing, Germany, exchange program, New England Math League, Berkshire Youth United, softball for the Parks Department and is co-chairwoman of the Citizen Scholarship Foundation.

roll throughout high school. In the community, Simonelli volunteers with the Special-Olympics, Cops and Kids and Service Society. She is employed by Mazzeo's Ristorante. In the fall, she plans to attend Bentley College majoring in business.

• **Lisa Southard**, 17, daughter of Millicent and David Southard, is a senior at Pittsfield High School where she is involved with the Peer, Resource Team, SADD and yearbook committee. She is a certified lifeguard and swim instructor. Southard is employed by East Street Video and Variety.

• **Kristin Wiehl**, 17, daughter of Steven and Nancy Wiehl, is a senior at Pittsfield High School. In the community, she volunteers at Berkshire Medical Center, and at Williams and Alendale elementary schools. Harts' Pharmacy and Century 21 will be her sponsors.



Sled races slated Saturday at Clapp Park

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee and the Department of Community Services, Parks and Recreation have announced that the "anything goes sled races" will be held as planned this Saturday at Clapp Park.

Participants have been encouraged to bring any suitable sleds. Trophy prizes will be awarded to the most unique sled designs.

There will be several divisions divided by ages from 1 through 100 and trophy prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers in each age category.

Information: Dave Melle, organizer, 684-3050. 2/18/99



Carnival for the kids

A field of 32 young skiers turned out yesterday for the Pittsfield Winter Carnival's annual City Ski Meet at Bousquet. In top photo, race organizer Dave Melle offers last-minute instructions to Jimmy Zuber (36), as Danny Martin and Katherine Ferris (34) look on. In bottom photo, Collin Flynn (11) smiles as he starts his path to victory in the non-racer age 7-and-under division. Complete results are on the Scoreboard, Page C4.

Photos by Bob McDonough / Berkshire Eagle Staff

2/17/99

Winter Carnival events are announced

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee has announced Winter Carnival events scheduled for this weekend and Sunday, March 7. The committee has stated that this weekend's events will take place regardless of the weather.

The "Anything Goes" Sled Races will be held tomorrow at Clapp Park on West Housatonic Street from 11 to 4. Registration begins at 11. Entry is free. Free hot dogs and hot chocolate will be available from the Pittsfield Fire Department Workers International Firefighters Union Local 2647.

Family Day will take place this Sunday at Clapp Park from 11 to 4. This day marks the last chance to meet the Winter Carnival Queen contestants and purchase buttons. Activities include sled, skating and snowshoe races, horseshoes, kite flying, snow sculpturing (weather permitting) and golf-on-ice competitions.

Depending on wind conditions, there will also be hot air balloon rides for the children. Haywagon rides are provided throughout the event as well as free helium balloons and refreshments for the children. Dogsled rides for children only are planned. Warm and cold refreshments will be available for a nominal fee. Registration begins at 11. Entry is free.

The ice fishing derby will be held Sunday, March 7, from 6:30 to 2 on Onota Lake at the Controy Pavilion. Prizes will be awarded in many categories. There may be a nominal entry fee. This event was displaced in the move of Family Day to Clapp Park.

For information on all events: Department of Social Services, Parks and Recreation at 499-9343.

2/19/99

Family Day



Photos by Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee held its Winter Carnival Family Day yesterday at Clapp Park. Part of the activities included, above, a dog sled ride headed by a team of malamutes. At left, Angela Rodriguez, 6, of Pittsfield didn't leave the activities without first getting her face painted. Because of wind conditions, the hot air balloon ride didn't take place. The ice fishing derby portion of the Winter Carnival will take place on March 7 at the Controy Pavilion on Onota Lake.

2/22/99



The weather was chilly, but the smiles were warm for Saturday's "Winterfest" at Springside Park. Courtney Sloane and her mom, Peggy, bundled up for the celebration.



A few inches of freshly fallen snow tempted "Winterfest" revelers to try snowshoeing. Groups explored the expansive park throughout the day. Event organizer Tommie Bailey stands ready to assist.



With the temperature in the teens and snow in the air, Winterfest revelers warmed up inside Springside House, where Barbara Wynroth served hot chocolate.



Here we go: A toboggan built for two sails down a Springside Park hill. Sledding capped the afternoon.



Where there's a hill, there's a way

From wooden sleds to inflatable tubes, Clapp Park has been a winter gathering site for Pittsfield children for decades. Snow, however, has been lacking this year.

Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Skating club offers beginners' lessons at Boys', Girls Club

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club, in conjunction with the Department of Community Services, Parks and Recreation, will conduct its annual Learn-to-Skate program beginning Monday, Dec. 27.

The program will run Monday through Thursday, Dec. 27-30, from 11:45 to 12:45 at the Pittsfield Boys' and Girls' Club rink on Melville Street.

Skaters are required to wear helmets, gloves and knee and elbow pads. They should dress warmly but avoid loose, baggy clothes and long scarves. No double runner skates are permitted. A limited number of skates may be rented from the Boys' and Girls' Club. Skaters must be at least 5 years of age.

Registration will be held this Tuesday from 6:30 to 7 p.m. at the skating rink. Cost of the program is \$15 on Tuesday and \$17 thereafter if space is available. Eighty skaters will be accepted.

For later registration, the Department of Parks and Recreation at 499-9343.

2/29/99

Skating club offers beginners' lessons at Boys', Girls Club

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parks Speed Skating Club has announced that there will be an additional registration for the Learn-to-Skate sessions to be held during the Christmas school vacation, Monday through Thursday, Dec. 27-30. The lessons will be held from 11:45 to 12:45 at the Boys' and Girls' Club skating rink. Registration will be held this Tuesday from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Registration fee is \$15.

2/29/99





Rachael Plaine, 17, second from left, a senior at St. Joseph's High School, waits to be announced with her fellow Winter Carnival Queen contestants at the Itam Lodge in Pittsfield on Friday night.

Winter Carnival picks queen

By Tony Dobrowolski
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — One by one, the 16 contestants at Friday night's 54th annual Pittsfield Winter Carnival Queen coronation ball walked across the floor at Itam Lodge, curtseied, and made their way to the reviewing stand.

As Rachael Plaine watched her fellow contestants, she thought several of them had a chance to be this year's Winter Carnival queen. Anyone but her, she thought.

The 16 contestants sold a record 53,770 Winter Carnival buttons.

She was wrong. Gasping as her name was announced, crying as outgoing queen Jacky Reynolds put the crown on her head, the 17-year-old Plaine was selected by the judges as this year's Winter Carnival queen.

"I was so surprised," said Plaine, a senior at St. Joseph's High School, where she is a member of the National Honor Society. "I couldn't believe it when they called my name. I didn't expect it at all. I guess I was laughing and crying at the same time. I still can't believe it."

Almost as shocked as Plaine was 17-year-old Taconic High School senior Re-



Rachael Plaine reacts as she is declared the Carnival Queen. Outgoing queen Jacky Reynolds is at left.

becca L. Hashim, who was selected as both Lady-in-Waiting and Miss Congeniality. The Miss Congeniality Award is selected by the contestants.

"Miss Congeniality meant more to me," Hashim said. "I was the only girl from Taconic. I didn't know anybody."

QUEEN, continued on B5



Winter Carnival Queen Rachael Plaine gets congratulations from her mom.

■ Queen from B1

By virtue of their awards, Plaine won a \$1,000 scholarship and Hashim a \$500 scholarship to the schools of their choice.

The 16 contestants also sold a record 53,770 Winter Carnival buttons, breaking the previous high of 45,432 set last year. This year's total sale of buttons produced a gross income of \$26,885. The money raised helps support carnival events conducted annually by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Services, Parks and Recreation. The money also goes toward supporting local competitors on

the state, regional and national levels.

Plaine was also the top button seller, 11,007, which earned her an additional \$1,100 scholarship. Queen's contest and Coronation Ball chairwoman Laurie A. Mantegari said Plaine's total was the second highest in Winter Carnival queen history.

"I went to so many sponsors every day," Plaine said. "I told Laurie I was going to beat the record."

Contestants were judged in five categories — poise, expression, appearance, personality, and knowledge of Winter Carnival activities. The judging, which took place before the ceremony, delayed the start of the coronation ball 45 minutes.

"The judges really got involved with the questions," Mantegari said. "The girls did such a good job. I'm really proud of them."

Plaine, wearing a cream-colored silk gown accented with beading, thought she flubbed some of the questions.

"I was so nervous," Plaine said. "The one thing Laurie told us was, 'Don't say um.' I must have said um about a million times."

Plaine, Hashim and the other contestants each chipped in \$3 to buy Mantegari a dozen red roses.

"Thank you, girls. You were wonderful," Mantegari said. "And remember, you're all queens. OK?"

The Berkshire Eagle, Monday, December 27, 1999 — B5

Activities announced for Pittsfield Winter Carnival

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Services and the Parks and Recreation Department has announced the schedule of events for the 55th annual Pittsfield Winter Carnival.

The event, which provides winter activities, mostly outdoors and free of charge, is for people of all ages. The Pittsfield Winter Carnival is planned and executed by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee, a totally volunteer nonprofit organization, under the auspices of the City of Pittsfield, Department of Community Services and Parks and Recreation.

The following is a schedule of events. Extreme weather conditions may cause changes or cancellation of events.

A Button Design Contest, from Sept. 27 to Oct. 27, was held to award prizes to Pittsfield schoolchildren in a contest, broken down into age groups, to design the year's button.

The overall winning design is made into a 2-inch button that will be sold by contestants as part of the Queen Contest. The sale of these buttons raises money to support the activities of the carnival.

A Home Snow Sculpture Contest will be held from Saturday, Jan. 8 through Saturday, Jan. 22. A family or group of individuals may construct a snow sculpture, and upon completion a judge will inspect and photograph the sculpture. The winners will be judged by the committee based on the photographs taken. Winners will be chosen and announced at Family Day. Entry is free and entry forms are available from the Parks Department.

The Pittsfield Winter Carnival Queen Contest is open to girls 17 to 21 years of age who live, attend school or work in Pittsfield or an adjoining town. The contest runs from Sunday, Jan. 16, through Sunday, Feb. 13. There is no entry fee. This contest culminates with the Queen's Coronation Ball, where the winning contestant and

the lady in waiting are crowned.

Scholarships are awarded to the new Queen and Lady-in-waiting. In addition, the contestants choose Miss Congeniality and a special scholarship award is given to the top button seller. During the four-week Queen contest, the contestants must sell a minimum of 1,000 buttons, 2 for \$1, to qualify to be judged for Queen. A maximum of 16 girls may enter.

Application forms will be available in early January at Pittsfield high schools, Berkshire Community College and at the Parks Department offices at Springside House, 874 North St. The first 16 qualified applications submitted will be accepted for the contest.

Family Day set Jan. 23

Family Day, to be held Sunday, Jan. 23, at 11 a.m., is the premier outdoor family event of the Winter Carnival.

It will be held at the Controy Pavilion on the shore of Onota Lake.

The public is invited to meet all the Queen contestants and purchase buttons. Activities include sled, skating and snowshoe races, horses on ice, kite flying, snow sculpturing, ice fishing and golf-on-ice competitions.

This year's Family Day includes tethered hot air balloon rides for children (50-100 foot vertical ascent). These are dependent on wind conditions.

Horse drawn haywagon rides are provided throughout the afternoon and are free. Helium balloons and refreshments for children, face painting and magician demonstrations. A wood stove heated pavilion is available as are warm and cold refreshments. Entry to all activities is free, except for the ice fishing derby.

Toboggan races will be held with two-, three- and four-person categories for all ages. Toboggans are supplied, but participants may bring their own. The event, held Sunday, Jan. 30, is scheduled for Osecola Park on Gale Avenue, but if conditions are not adequate the event will be held at Clapp Park, West Housatonic Street. Registration starts at 11 a.m.; timed

runs start at noon.

City Downhill Slalom Ski Meet competition for youngsters under the age of 13 will be held Saturday, Feb. 5, at Bousquet Ski Area. Each entrant has at least two runs down the hill, with the best time counting toward trophies. Registration begins at 9 a.m., racing at 10. There is no entry fee.

Cross Country Ski Races, held on Sunday, Feb. 6, at Canterbury Farm, Ski Touring area on Fred Snow Road in Becket, are open to all ages. Registration starts at 9 a.m. and entry is free.

Automobile Ice Time Trials on a

1.15-mile slalom course set up on the frozen surface of Onota Lake at the Controy Pavilion on Lakeway Drive will be held on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 12 and 13. The event is open to all licensed drivers with automobiles equipped with seat belts. Helmets are required and loaners are available. This event is co-sanctioned

by the Mohawk Hudson Region of the Sports Car Club of America. A driver may enter more than one vehicle, and loaner cars may be available at an additional cost to cover fuel expenses. Entry is \$20 per entrant, registration will begin at 9 a.m., and timed runs start at 11.

The Queen's Coronation Ball will be held on Friday, Feb. 18, at the Itam Lodge at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$7 per person. The ball is the culmination of the Queen Contest. The Queen and lady-in-waiting for the following season are chosen and crowned, and other awards, such as top button seller and Miss Congeniality are presented. College scholarships are the top awards.

Pittsfield Short Track Speed Skating Championships are held at the Vietnam Veterans Skating Rink in North Adams on Saturday, Feb. 19, at noon. The Pittsfield Speed Skating Club of the Pittsfield Department of

Community Development, Parks and Recreation, is the host team for this event.

There is an entry fee and entrants are members of the Amateur Speedskating Union. There is no fee for spectators.

Anything-Go-Sled Races are open to all ages. This is the second year for the event which will be held at Clapp Park on West Street on Sunday, Feb. 20. Registration starts at 11 a.m. and entrants may be any age. Bring

your cardboard box, snow tube, sled, plastic swimming pool or antique bathtub. There is no entry fee.

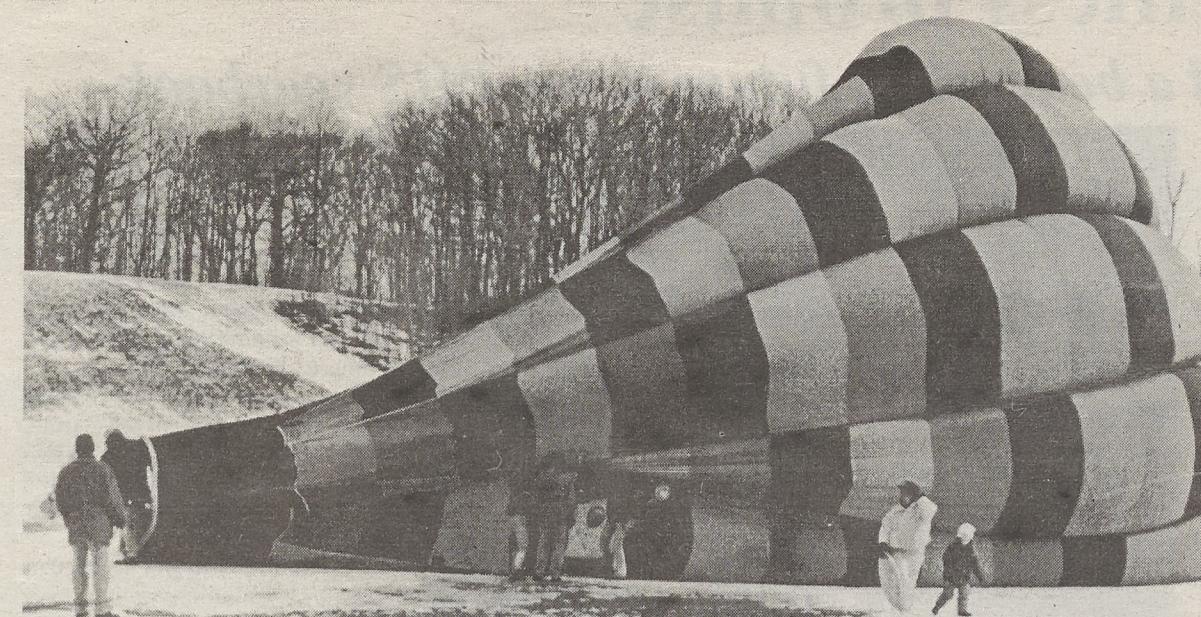
Persons interested in helping may contact the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee.

Meetings are on most Wednesday evenings at 7 during January and February and are held at the Springside House on upper North Street.

Information: 499-9343 weekdays between 9 and 4.

Family Day

After two postponements and a change of sites, Pittsfield's winter Family Day took place Sunday at Clapp Park.



Attendees tried not to let cold weather — or a balloon that refused to soar — deflate their enjoyment of the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee's Family Day on Sunday.



Many planned activities couldn't be held at Clapp Park due to limited snow cover, but these youngsters relished an outdoor magic performance.



The horseshoes on ice competition — traditionally held atop Onota Lake — proved among the most successful transplanted events. Just a little momentum ensured horseshoes would slide toward the targets.



The sledding hill at Clapp Park was icy and barren in stretches, though many sledders weren't deterred. This youngster awaited on a flat ice spot, contemplating movement.



Hay rides around the park proved popular. The winter carnival continues on Friday with the Queen competition banquet. An ice-fishing derby is tentatively scheduled for March 7.

December 30, 1999

Winter carnival events commence in January

The Pittsfield Winter Carnival — a series of free community events — will swing into active mode during January.

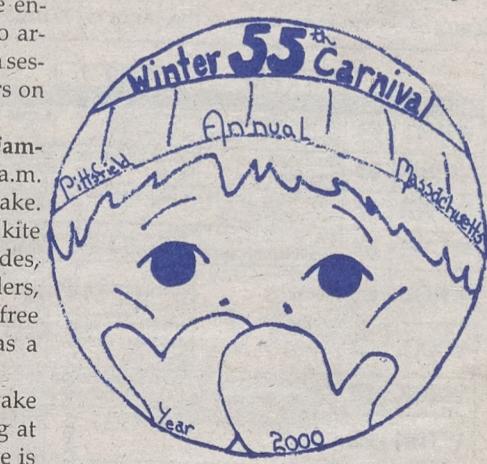
The 55th annual festival is sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee, a volunteer organization that works in conjunction with the municipal parks department.

New this year — pending the arrival of snow — is a home snow sculpture contest. When the sculpture is completed, the entrants contact the parks department to arrange for an inspection and photograph session. Judges will announce the winners on January 23.

The premier event of the carnival is Family Day on Sunday, January 23 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Burbank Park and Onota Lake. Activities will include haywagon rides, kite flying, golf-on-ice, hot air balloon rides, horseshoes, magic and races for sledders, skaters and snowshoers. All events are free except an ice-fishing derby, which has a modest fee.

The annual Toboggan Races will take place on Sunday, January 30 beginning at noon at Osecola Park. The alternate site is Clapp Park. Toboggans are supplied or participants can bring their own. All ages may compete in two, three and four person categories. Registration starts at 11 a.m. for the free competition.

The Winter Carnival Queen Contest for young women ages 17 to 21 officially runs from January 16 through February 13 under the supervision of Laurie Mantegari. The contest culminates in February with a coronation ball. During the four-week contest, entrants sell buttons at 50 cents to help fund the overall carnival. (A maximum of 16 contestants are allowed). Entry forms are available from the parks department at 874 North Street.



This year's Pittsfield Winter Carnival button was designed by Cheryl Martin, a fifth grader at St. Mark Middle School. The button depicts a child with a surprised look. More than 50 youngsters submitted possible designs.



Family Day events on January 23 will include quirky activities such as "horseshoes on ice."

Pittsfield Winter Carnival Queen contest applications due Jan. 11

PITTSFIELD — A contest for the 55th annual Winter Carnival Queen will begin in January.

The contest is open to all single girls ages 17 through 21 who have never been married, have no children, are of good moral character, and who live, attend school or work in Pittsfield — or who live in the adjoining towns of Dalton, Hancock, Lanesboro, Lenox, Richmond or Washington.

Each contestant must sell a minimum of 1,000 Winter Carnival buttons to be eligible for judging at the Queen's Coronation Ball, which has been scheduled for Friday, Feb. 18, at Itam Lodge.

A Miss Congeniality will be selected by the queen contestants and the contestant selling the most buttons will receive a special gift. The queen and lady-in-waiting also will receive special gifts.

The sale of buttons is a separate contest and has no bearing on the judging of queen and lady-in-waiting. The contestant accumulating the highest score during the judging will become queen.

Application forms, contest rules and regulations, and more information on the contest may be obtained from Mantegari by calling 442-5352. Application forms also are available at the parks and recreation office at Springside House, 874 North St., and also at the three city high schools. There is a limit of 16 contestants and the deadline for filing applications is Tuesday, Jan. 11.

5th-grader designs winning button

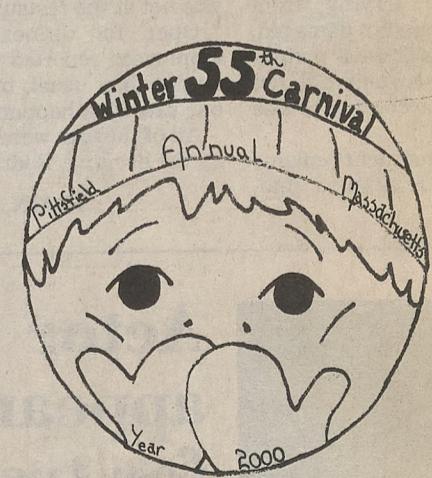
PITTSFIELD — Laurie A. Mantegari, organizer of this year's button design contest, has announced that Cheryl Martin, a fifth-grader from St. Mark's School, has won the 2000 Winter Carnival button design contest.

The button design, which depicts a child with a surprised look on its face, was chosen from more than 50 entries submitted to the Winter Sports Committee by children from the city's elementary, middle and high schools.

Category winners were also chosen according to grade. In the kindergarten through Grade 2 category, Michael Drumm from Conte Elementary School was the winner. Andrea Francis from Conte was the grades 3-5 category winner. In the grades 6-8 category, Molly Murphy from St. Mark's was the winner. In grades 9-12, Catherine Burt was the winner from Taconic High School.

The winning designer received a \$100 gift certificate to the Berkshire Mall at the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee meeting on Dec. 16. Each category winner received a \$50 Berkshire Mall gift certificate at the meeting.

The contest is sponsored by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee Inc. of the Department of Community Service, Parks and Recreation. Buttons are sold by contestants for Winter Carnival Queen, and proceeds help pay for carnival events. Buttons will go on sale Sunday, Jan. 16.



12/21/99
12/24/99





Parks budget must grow to maintain facilities, new commissioner says

The initial parks department budget presented by community services director Robert Mellace looks a lot like last year's. In fact the bottom line has barely changed at all.

New parks commissioner James Conant believes that the lack of new parks funds could have serious consequences in coming years, and is already beginning to cause problems.

"What do you do, wait until you just collapse?" Conant remarked during this past Monday's parks commission meeting. "We're inching toward that scenario. We've got a bucket of bolts out there."

Conant, who has groundskeeping experience, said that parks department equipment is too dilapidated to maintain playing fields. These grounds, once they fall into disrepair, are extremely difficult to recover.

"My concern is real," he said. "Those fields, they're in tough shape. It's just not going to function as an athletic field if we don't do something."

Some park fields may soon become unusable for sports like soccer and baseball. Even fields that have been refurbished, such as Clapp Park on West Housatonic Street, are in jeopardy, he added.

"It's just going to be all beat up again if you don't maintain it," he said.

Conant suggested that in order to save city parks, some type of user fees may have to be established. "I think it's really mandatory that [the city] collect a couple of bucks," he said, noting particularly the extensive ongoing improvements at



Parks commissioners may ask the school department to provide more funds toward the upkeep of fields such as this one at Clapp Park that is used by the Pittsfield High School baseball team.

Burbank Park. "People going in for review and input, requests \$277,423 free — it's got to stop."

Commission chairman Clifford Nilan suggested that school money should be used to maintain parks, considering how many student activities utilize parks.

"The school department should chip in," he said.

Conant agreed. "You look at [the school department's] end of it, they've got shiny everything over there," he said. "We're the Flintstones over here. There's no fortitude to do anything about it."

The board agreed to invite parks maintenance chief Anthony Stracuzzi to a meeting to discuss park upkeep and equipment.

The parks budget draft, as submitted by Mellace to the commission for

Mellace's draft budget does include a request for an additional \$10,000 for "vehicle maintenance and repair."

"Due to the aging condition of our vehicle fleet, this request is important to help ensure our vehicles remain operative," he states.

Mellace suggested that parks commissioners create a separate "wish list" budget. "Based on comments received throughout the year from both elected officials, school officials, volunteer organizations and the general public, there appears to be a strong desire for increased capital improvements, park maintenance and recreation programming."

Park commission reviews varied activity requests

By Anthony Fyden

Professional wrestling at Wahconah Park, a religious rally at the Common and "Cyclocross" bike racing at West Memorial Park were among summer events approved by the park commission this past Monday.

The board also approved a day of family-oriented stage performances at Pitt Park — but not before significantly scaling down the proposal.

During a meeting at Springside House, the board heard from several petitioners requesting use of city parks. While most met with board approval, members deemed a request from the Reigning Love Church too far reaching.

Representatives of the West Street church had asked to use Pitt Park on John Street for four consecutive Saturdays in August to hold family-oriented performances. Spokesman Bob Graham said that the church was hoping to "give something back to the community" rather than solicit new church members.

Graham said that the free performances, which would feature a puppet show, would stress family values. "It's a kind of alternative to what [kids] normally see on TV," he said.

Commission chairman Anthony Massimiano suggested that allowing the church to use the bandshell at Pitt Park for the four dates may be unfair to other park patrons.

"[These] Saturdays in the summer are when the park will be at its heaviest use," he said. "When I first saw this I said, 'whoa, this is the whole summer'."

Board member Clifford Nilan agreed, saying "I personally think that the four weeks is a bit much."

Commissioner Robert Smith noted that city residents don't have a lot of recreational options and may wish to enjoy a quiet afternoon at the park rather than see a performance.

"There are only a few parks left as it is," he said. "For us to tie up a park for most of the summer, that probably is not something we should do."

Graham said that the church would be willing to book the park for one date, and then tentatively reserve it for the other three dates to see if another group wanted to use the site.

But Massimiano suggested that the church should choose only one date, and could then seek additional dates if the event is successful. With Graham's approval, the commission voted unanimously to allow the church to use the park on August 7, with a rain date of August 14.

Graham said that two performances will be held on the bandshell, both free and open to the public.

Other park events approved on Monday include:

A professional wrestling event at Wahconah Park, scheduled for August 21 at 7 p.m. According to community services director Robert Mellace, the proposal by Silver & Blue promotions calls for a wrestling card featuring such talent as Jiminy "Super Fly" Snooka and "King Kong" Bundy. Tickets will range from \$10-\$15 with a portion donated to charity, the petition stated.

The board unanimously approved the event, contingent on the promoters signing a "licensing agreement" endorsed by the city solicitor's office.

A "Cyclocross" bicycle race scheduled for October 2 will begin near West Memorial Park, located across from the Allendale Shopping Center. According to spokesman Mike Ward, approximately 125-150 racers

should participate in the road race, which will begin at the park and head north up Rt. 8.

The park will primarily be used as a parking and registration site, Ward said.

The board unanimously approved the petition, but reserved the right for parks officials to cancel the approval should wet weather leave the park vulnerable to damage.

City seeking tree for Park Square

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services is asking anyone willing to donate an evergreen tree for use as the city's official Christmas tree at Park Square to call its office at 499-9343 by Friday.

Criteria for selecting the tree will be minimum height of approximately 30 feet; superior shape; ease of access for cutting; adequate room to safely fell it, and ease of transporting it.

In cooperation with the city's Department of Emergency Management, screening and selection of the tree will take place the week of Nov. 8. Cutting and installation of the tree at Park Square is scheduled for the week of Nov. 15 or 22.

The tree-lighting ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. Details regarding the date and program for the lighting of the tree will be made available at a later date.

Nativity scene approved for site in Park Square

By D.R. Bahlman

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — A Pittsfield man whose display of a Nativity scene in Park Square last December sparked a controversy that extended through the holiday season has been informed that the creche may be placed in the park again this year.

"Christmas is a 24-hour holiday, not an 11-hour holiday," he said.

Massimiano said the commission's decision gives Papa "every daylight hour" on Christmas.

However, the Park Commission declined Monday night to grant Jon A. Papa's request that the Nativity be allowed to remain in Park Square for 24 hours, from midnight on Christmas Eve until midnight on Christmas Day.

Instead, the panel decided to allow Papa to display the creche anytime from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Christmas Day. The condition is identical to the one the commission agreed upon in 1998. The vote last night was 3 to 1.

"We thought long and hard about this," Park Commission Chairman Anthony G. Massimiano Jr. told Papa. "... It was a fair thing we did last year."

Commission members Clifford J. Nilan and Sue Colker agreed. Another commissioner, James B. Conant, said that it makes no difference to him whether the Nativity is displayed for 11 hours or 24 hours. Conant cast the lone "no" vote, and declined Massimiano's invitation to offer an amended motion.

Commission member Robert J. Smith did not attend the meeting, which was held at Springside House on North Street.

Twice, Papa asked the commission to reconsider its decision. He

said that he received numerous expressions of support last year and wondered aloud if his presentation of a petition urging the commission to grant his request for a 24-hour display would influence its ruling.

"Christmas is a 24-hour holiday, not an 11-hour holiday," he said.

Massimiano said the commission's decision gives Papa "every daylight hour" on Christmas.

On Dec. 14, 1998, the commission reversed a decision it had made the preceding month in which it denied Papa permission to erect the 3- by 5-foot creche in what is arguably Pittsfield's most visible public place.

Papa had sought legal help from the American Center for Law and Justice, an organization funded by Pat Robertson, a leader of the nation's conservative Christians.

The coalition sent a demand letter to the city; the letter cited federal case law supporting a private individual's right to place a Nativity scene in a public park. The letter promised a lawsuit if Papa was denied the right to display the creche.

In a memorandum to the commission written in November 1998, City Solicitor Kathleen G. Alexander stated that reasonable construction of case law supports Papa's right to display the Nativity scene because it amounts to constitutionally protected speech.

However, Alexander noted that the board's right to regulate the time, place and manner of the display is also well settled.

City seeking tree for Park Square

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services is asking anyone willing to donate an evergreen tree for use as the city's official Christmas tree at Park Square to call its office at 499-9343 by Friday.

Criteria for selecting the tree will be minimum height of approximately 30 feet; superior shape; ease of access for cutting; adequate room to safely fell it, and ease of transporting it.

In cooperation with the city's Department of Emergency Management, screening and selection of the tree will take place the week of Nov. 8. Cutting and installation of the tree at Park Square is scheduled for the week of Nov. 15 or 22.

The tree-lighting ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. Details regarding the date and program for the lighting of the tree will be made available at a later date.

Parks commission has unanswered questions about BMC nurses' rally

The parks commission took no action Monday on a request for a rally and vigil a union plans to hold Wednesday at Park Square.

The Massachusetts Nurses Association, representing registered nurses at Berkshire Medical Center, had requested use of the downtown park for a 90-minute event. Parks commissioners tabled action on the request because members had several questions that were not answered by the union.

A note faxed Monday to community services director Bob Mellace said the union planned a "candlelight vigil...to celebrate Florence Nightengale's birthday" and to bring attention to stalled contract talks with the hospital.

Parks commissioner James Conant wanted to know "how much of this is to honor Florence Nightengale and how much of this is to hold a picket?" Sue Colker also chafed at authorizing a demonstration at the park, though Anthony Massimiano said the nature of the event was irrelevant. "I think we need to stay away from the content of what they do," he said.

Commissioners said the plans were vague, making reference to possibly setting up a stage, giving no sense of the expected attendance and including no pledge to clean the park after the event. The union failed to send a representative to Monday's meeting.

"This is a late request that's not even on the agenda," said Massimiano.

The commission does not control the sidewalk around Park Square which is often used for political demonstrations. However the commission controls the grass area. Citing the lack of information about the event, commissioners tabled the nurses' union request.

Colker and Massimiano said that the request highlights the need to devise a policy for Park Square use. In general, the commission has encouraged groups planning events to utilize the First Street Common or another site better equipped for crowds.

"Since we are making major improvements to [Park Square], we really need a set policy," said Massimiano.

PITTSFIELD: The Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation has announced that registration blanks for the special needs camp at Highland School are available and can be picked up at the Parks Department office at 874 North St. Registration will close on Wednesday, June 30. Camp will run Tuesday, July 6, through Friday, Aug. 6. Information: The Parks Department at 499-9343. *6/15/99*

JOB LISTINGS
Department of Parks and Recreation has announced needs for lifeguards at Onota Lake. The summer season runs for 10 weeks from June 28 through September 6. All lifeguards must have the necessary certifications. Applications are available at either the Parks Department, 874 North St. or the Personnel Office at City Hall. Questions may be directed to the Parks Department at 499-9343. *6/10/99*



Vincent J. Hebert

Vincent Hebert dies at 81

By D.R. Bahlman
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Vincent J. Hebert of 55 Rose Terrace, who served as superintendent of Pittsfield's Department of Parks and Recreation for 39 years and as a tireless advocate for the welfare of the city's youngest and oldest citizens, died yesterday at Berkshire Medical Center. He was 81 and had suffered a stroke earlier this month.

Possessed of a hearty and gregarious manner, Mr. Hebert drew no distinction between duty and relaxation: His energetic fulfillment of his professional responsibilities assured the availability of recreational opportunities for thousands of people over the years.

"Catering to tourist and native alike, he manages to inject perpetual verve into the task at hand, whether it's answering questions about a band concert, checking the docks at the lakes, or skirmishing with city officials over capital outlay funds for park development," reads a 1985 profile of Mr. Hebert.

Enthusiastic speaker

Those assigned to record the minutes of meetings never found themselves obliged to ask Mr. Hebert to repeat a statement. An enthusiastic public speaker, he generally eschewed microphones, preferring to stand by his chair and deliver — in strident tones — his views on the matter at hand. His orations were concise; their brevity earned him the sobriquet of "Two Minute Vin" in some circles of municipal government.

No aspect of Pittsfield's public recreation program was unaffected by Mr. Hebert's stewardship. When he announced his retirement in September 1989, he spoke of his commitment to increasing the city's parkland, a commitment fulfilled by the large expansion of Burbank and Springside parks during his tenure.

"It should become to Pittsfield what Central Park is to New York City," he said of Springside Park.

His biggest disappointment, he said in

HEBERT, continued on B2

3/24/99

Springside meeting set for Monday

PITTSFIELD — The Parks Commission will hold a public meeting regarding the Springside Pond rehabilitation study as part of its regularly scheduled meeting Monday.

Representatives from the engineering and landscape architecture firm of Dufresne-Henry Inc., Greenfield will present their preliminary findings and obtain input regarding the community's vision for the pond and its surroundings.

The study is being funded by the city of Pittsfield and a Pond Grant.

11/10/99

ERIC BISS

Of personal liberties & revolutions

December's dust up over the proposed nativity in Park Square would have been fun to watch except for the fact the fundamental issue was so grossly distorted.

Although he wrote the Declaration of Independence and eventually became president, Thomas Jefferson played virtually no part in the drafting of the Constitution. He was in France serving as our ambassador.

His protege, James Madison, played a key role, however.

Upon seeing the finished document Jefferson made two suggestions: a Bill of Rights and term limits, particularly for the President. He got his first wish almost immediately. The second is only partially accomplished and may never fully be.

Despite their close friendship, Madison and Jefferson didn't agree on everything. Madison was the Father of the Constitution and saw it as a perpetual document. Jefferson saw the French Revolution up close and thought a revolution was necessary every two or three generations. They never agreed on that point.

Six generations later it's clear they were both wrong. The truth was between their positions. Apparently we need a revolution, at least a total re-write of the Constitution, every five or six generations. Even the esteemed James MacGregor Burns of Williams College is now taking this point of view.

What we now have is not constitutional government, but whatever contortion the Supreme Court goes along with or manufactures at any given time. The Tenth Amendment, never repealed, is nonetheless a dead letter. The Second Amendment is being gutted and the First and Four-

teenth Amendments have been expanded to mean things never intended.

The Founding Fathers never intended the separation of church and state and the First Amendment says no such thing. It simply says we are all free to practice our religion and these United States will never become a theocracy. There can be no established religion. This forbidding of an established religion is now con-

dent committing perjury and obstruction of justice and a majority not caring.

A generation ago Richard Nixon saw the problem developing and called for strict constructionism from the Supreme Court. It was too little, too late.

Expediency has put the constitution on a collision course with itself.

Jon Papa's constitutionally guaranteed right to practice his religion was

questioned in the name of a doctrine the recent revelations never mentioned.

The recent revelations about Sally Hemings prove Jefferson wasn't perfect. Probably because of that, he understood his fellow man wasn't perfect either. His prescription of a revolution every two or three generations was too pessimistic but nonetheless more realistic than James Madison's.

Ben Franklin got it right. When asked what the Constitutional Convention had created he responded that it was a republic, if we could keep it.

It had a pretty good run and it no doubt has a few years left in it. But its days were numbered.

It could handle the Civil War, industrialization, the Kaiser and Prohibition but not the New Deal, laziness, expediency and political correctness.

Wouldn't you love to be a fly on the wall when some politically correct lightweight tries to explain to any of the Founding Fathers that Jon Papa should be hassled more for putting a Nativity in Park Square than he would have been had he burned a flag there? *1/4/99*

Appointments, promotion approved

Councilors on Tuesday approved the appointment of several city officials to boards and positions.

Robert Mellace was reappointed as community services director, continuing his job at the parks & recreation department. His term is for two years.

Amy W. Davidson was reappointed as an assessor. Pittsfield Police Department.

Alf Barbala was named to the community development board as an associate member, succeeding David Phelps.

James B. Conant was named to the parks commission, succeeding Ben Kaplan.

11/4/99

Summer park laborers funded

Councilors on Tuesday approved an \$18,000 appropriation to fund seasonal labor for the parks department.

At-large councilor Angelo Stracuzzi said that the paperwork describing the request was complex but that basically "it's just a rollover."

Funds left over from Fiscal Year 1999 intended for this year did not remain in the labor account, which is used to hire extra maintenance help during the summer season, but ended up in the general account.

Seasonal employment positions available

PITTSFIELD — The city is accepting applications for seasonal employment positions in the Department of Parks & Recreation, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Utilities (water and wastewater).

Applicants must be 18 years of age. Applications are available at the personnel department at City Hall, Room 107, 70 Allen St., from 8:30 to 4.

3/17/99

July 4th festivities to be dedicated to late Vin Hebert

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield 4th of July celebration will be dedicated in memory of Vincent J. Hebert, longtime head of the Pittsfield Department of Parks and Recreation.

At their last meeting, the members of the Pittsfield Parade Committee unanimously approved a request from chairman Jim Brassard and Gary Grunin to honor Hebert in this way.

Hebert was also involved in the staging of the city's annual Halloween Parade and the old Mardi Gras Playground Parade many years ago, Brassard added.

The committee approached Downtown Pittsfield Inc., the Pittsfield Mets and the Friends of the Colonial Theater, some of the groups involved in coordinating events for the July 4th weekend.

Obituaries

Joseph Harrison, 79, ump extraordinaire

PITTSFIELD — Joseph J. Harrison, 79, of 25 Woodbine Ave., died Sunday night at Willowood Health Care Facility.

In the headline for a 1986 article on Mr. Harrison, he was referred to as an "umpire extraordinaire." He was a founder of the Berkshire County Baseball Umpires Association and served 35 years as umpire-in-chief for the Pittsfield Parks and Recreation programs. He was a member of the Berkshire County Basketball Association for 46 years and held a lifetime membership in the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials.

Mr. Harrison was a former partner of Southgate Motors and manager of the parts department. He retired in 1986 after more than 46 years of service.

Born in Pittsfield on July 4, 1919, son of William and Mary Walsh Harrison, he was a 1937 graduate of Pittsfield High School and a 1941 graduate of the former Berkshire Business College.

An Army Air Force veteran of World War II, he was a staff sergeant stationed with the 34th Bomb Group in Ipswich, England. He was an engineer and top turret gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress of the Eighth Air Force.

He was the last of the founders and a former president of the Irish-American Organization, and a life member of the Charles Persip American Legion Post 68 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 446.

He was a communicant of St. Mark's Church, where he served as an usher for many years. He was also a member of the Berkshire County Baseball and Softball Officials Association, and a volunteer with the Boys' & Girls' Club, the RSVP Program and the Senior Center.

He and his wife, the former Rose A. Rooney, were married July 11, 1964, at Our Lady of the Valley Church in Sheffield.

Besides his wife, he leaves two brothers, James J. "Jay" Harrison of Pittsfield and Thomas R. Harrison of Ramsey, N.J.

FUNERAL NOTICE — Joseph J. Harrison, 79, died May 16. He is also survived by five nephews, Robert, Kevin, James and Michael Harrison, and James Fassell, and a niece, Cheryl Simmons. Calling hours at DEVANNY-CONDRON FUNERAL HOME will be Tuesday from 2 to 4.

FUNERAL SERVICES — will be Wednesday at 9:15 from the funeral home, followed by a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. at St. Mark's Church with the Rev. Henry L. Dorsch, pastor, officiating. Burial will follow in St. Joseph's Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Boys' & Girls' Club or to the St. Mark's Church Memorial Fund, both in care of the funeral home.

4/13/99

Natural hero

Pittsfield perhaps never had a more passionate advocate for parks, recreation and the city's environment than Vin Hebert, who passed away this week.

A civil servant of the highest caliber — and a citizen who continued working for the community long after his "retirement" — Hebert personified all that was once grand about the city's public park system.

Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr. noted that Hebert was like a grandfather to many residents. Indeed, Hebert was like a loving grandfather to everyone in the city, fighting to provide recreational options for young and old alike.

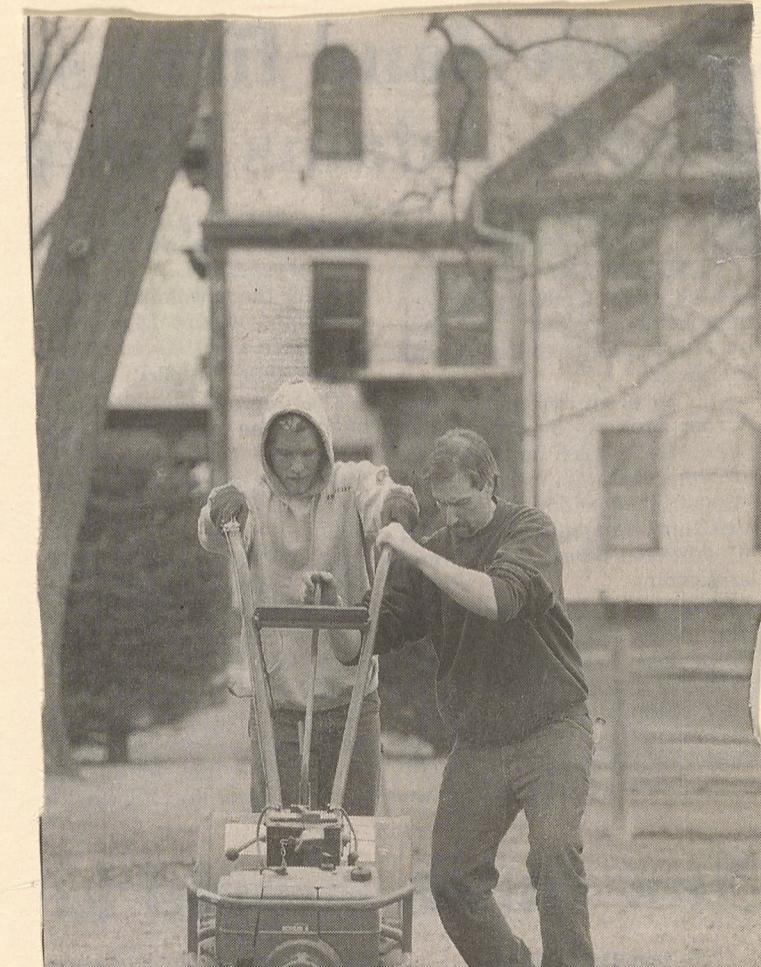
In recent years, with the parks system decimated by funding cutbacks and changed priorities, Hebert could have allowed bitterness to temper his zeal.

Instead he continued to look for positive ways to enact change. He still attended parks commission meetings, touted new ideas and suggested how old concepts could be brought back in new forms.

Though best known for his formal position with the parks department, Hebert was active in other civic endeavors including Pittsfield Beautiful and the council on aging.

It is fitting that a portion of Springside Park will forever be known as the Hebert Arboretum, a bucolic tribute to a man who loved Pittsfield — and wanted others to share the city's natural beauty.

3/25/99



Groundwork

Jason Marcucci, an AmeriCorps volunteer, and Kevin Phelps, Springside Park property manager, rototill an area that will become the park's new butterfly garden. It will be planted with flowers that attract butterflies.

Beri Gaver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Special honor

Genuine emotion is rare at municipal meetings but it filled the city council chambers on Tuesday.

A teary-eyed Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr. excused himself after councilors voted unanimously to name the city's new Benedict Road softball complex in memory of his father, Gerald Doyle, Sr.

Prior to becoming mayor, Doyle, Jr. championed the creation of the softball complex. Doyle, Sr. — a longtime civic leader and youth sports advocate — passed away shortly after the facility opened last year.

4/15/99

City seeks Christmas tree for Park Square

The parks department has invited residents willing to donate an evergreen tree for use as the city's official Christmas tree at Park Square, to call 499-9343 no later than Friday.

Criteria to select tree will include: a height of at least 30 feet, shape, access to the tree for cutting and ease of transporting the tree.

In cooperation with the city's emergency management office, screening and selection of trees will take place next week. Cutting and installation of the tree at Park Square is scheduled for the week of November 15 or 22.

The tree lighting ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, December 3 at 7 p.m.

11/9/99

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11/15/99

FUNERAL SERVICES — will be Wednesday at 9:15 from the funeral home, followed by a Liturgy of Christian

Nativity scene debate resurrected

Parks board again authorizes limited private display

By Anthony Fyden

The parks commission — skittish after a Christmas Nativity controversy last year — rejected a bid by Jon Papa to expand the amount of time he could display a Creche on Park Square.

Board members instead voted to allow Papa to display his figures of Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., dawn to dusk on Christmas day, as he did last Christmas.

"I think it went fine last year so I would suggest we have the same hours," said board member Cliff Nilan.

Papa argued that the time limit was neither justified nor proper. "I'd at least like to have a day — Christmas day," he said. "I personally feel I'm not asking for a lot."

Papa, who lives on Partridge Road, approached the commission several times last year asking to display his religious figures at the public park. He at first requested that the figures be left at the park for several days, but later modified the request to include only Christmas day.

Board members objected to the request on several fronts, particularly since Papa had originally sought to leave the display at the park unattended for an extended period of time.

An opinion from the city solicitor's



Jon Papa wants no part in the Nativity display that representatives of a coalition of churches places each year on the lawn of St. Stephen's (above). Papa last year won city approval to place a private creche on Park Square but park commissioners on Monday refused to allow him to expand the hours this year.

office indicated that while the Pittsfield Council of Churches was mission could not reject a park display, Papa's critics. The council suggested that Papa instead participate in its annual Creche display at St. Stephen's church, which is across the street from Park Square.

See NATIVITY page 7

Nativity display debate resurrected

continued from page 1

Church leaders hoped to avoid a repeat of a painful controversy that emerged in the early 90s over the public display of religious and secular holiday decorations on public property.

Nonetheless, Papa said on Monday that he was "surprised" at the reaction last year from clergy. "There really wasn't any reason for concern," he said.

In fact, Papa said that the effort to erect the creche on city property generated wide support. "I think it was clear last year through the radio and the paper that generally there was a lot of support," he said.

Board chairman Anthony Massimiano agreed with Nilan that the board should simply follow the standard that had been set. "Last

year, we thought long and hard about this," he noted.

James Conant, who was not a member when the issue was debated last season, asked if there was a set policy for these types of displays.

"In the absence of a set policy, this is what we allowed last year," Massimiano replied.

Conant indicated that he would support Papa's bid for displaying the figures for the entire day and evening of Christmas. "I'm indifferent whether it's 12 or 24 hours," he said. "I don't think it should be any more than 24 hours."

Board member Sue Colker, who vocally opposed the display effort last year, said that the commission should follow the precedent it set. "We opened up the door last year so I guess I'll go along with that," she said.

Limited hours

As it became clear that his petition for an expansion of hours would fail, Papa again appealed to board members. "Christmas is at least for 24 hours," he said. "It's not an 11 hour holiday. I appreciate the eleven hours. I just wish everyone would reconsider to at least 24 hours. I think that's fair."

10/7/99

Following a motion by Nilan, the commission voted to allow the creche to be displayed from 6 a.m. on Christmas morning through 5 p.m. that evening.

Voting in favor were Nilan, Massimiano and Colker. Conant, who apparently voted to allow the 24-hour display, voted no. Commission member Robert Smith was not present. *10/7/99*

DEP's 'request to sample 10 parks is not based on any credible ties to GE that we are aware of,' Magee wrote.

3/26/99 GE won't test parks, scrapyards for PCBs

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — General Electric has refused a request by the state Department of Environmental Protection to test 10 city parks and 37 current or former scrapyards for PCBs, saying the state has not produced any credible evidence linking the properties to the GE plant.

In a letter sent March 22, Jane Magee, GE's manager of Pittsfield environmental operations, said the company would continue to be willing to test properties that can be linked to the GE plant.

But GE would not be forwarding testing plans, as the DEP had requested.

"Your request to sample 10 parks is not based on any credible ties to GE that we are aware of," Magee said in a letter to J. Lyn Cutler, special projects section chief in the DEP's Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup.

Similarly, GE objected to the DEP request that the company prove the scrapyards were unlikely to be contaminated with PCBs.

In early 1997, the DEP asked GE to evaluate all city parks for PCB fill after high levels of chemicals were discovered at Dorothy Amos Park, a former scrapyard on West Street where GE transformers were once salvaged. The company said more testing was unwarranted because it was unlikely that other parks had received PCB fill.

On March 4, Cutler asked GE to evaluate 10 other parks, including Burbank Park, Crane Playground, Deming Park, the Dunn Conservation Area, Highland Playground, Kirvin Park, Marchisio Park, Osceola Park, Wahconah Park and the Tierney Conservation Area off Jason Street.

PCBs, continued on A5

PCBs from A1

Cutler said that the department believed there was "some potential" that GE fill would be found in those parks, based on historic aerial photos that showed fill being deposited in those areas from 1948 to 1972, the period during which GE gave away soil contaminated with PCBs to save money on landfilling. The DEP has also received tips from citizens about fill on properties that have since become parks.

She added that if GE refused to test the sites, the DEP would.

Magee wrote that the simple presence of fill is not an indicator of PCBs, since lowlands were commonly filled to create or extend developable tracts of land during that period. Magee said the DEP had failed to establish a credible link between the parks and the transformer plant.

In the past, such links included the presence of copper, ceramic insulators or other debris from GE's transformer operations, legal contracts memorializing agreements with former owners to accept GE fill, or immediate proximity to other properties shown to have PCBs in their soils.

Cutler also asked GE to conduct extensive research on current and former scrapyards to demonstrate why GE should not have to test those properties, many of which have since been redeveloped. That request represented a turnaround of sorts. In the past, it has been the DEP's burden to show a link between a property and GE before the company would test it.

In the spring and summer of 1998, GE removed 7,500 cubic yards of soil from Dorothy Amos Park and spent \$150,000 on renovations. GE officials declined to say what the cleanup itself cost.

Testing has shown that three other parks — Lakewood Park and across from Hibbard School,

Brattle Brook Park in Lakewood, and Fred Garner Park, alongside the Housatonic River, have reportable levels of PCBs in their soils.

GE used the chemical as an insulating fluid in some transformers that it made at its Morningside plant from 1930 to 1977, the year before the chemical was banned.

The EPA believes PCBs probably cause cancer in humans, as well as neurological, developmental and reproductive problems.

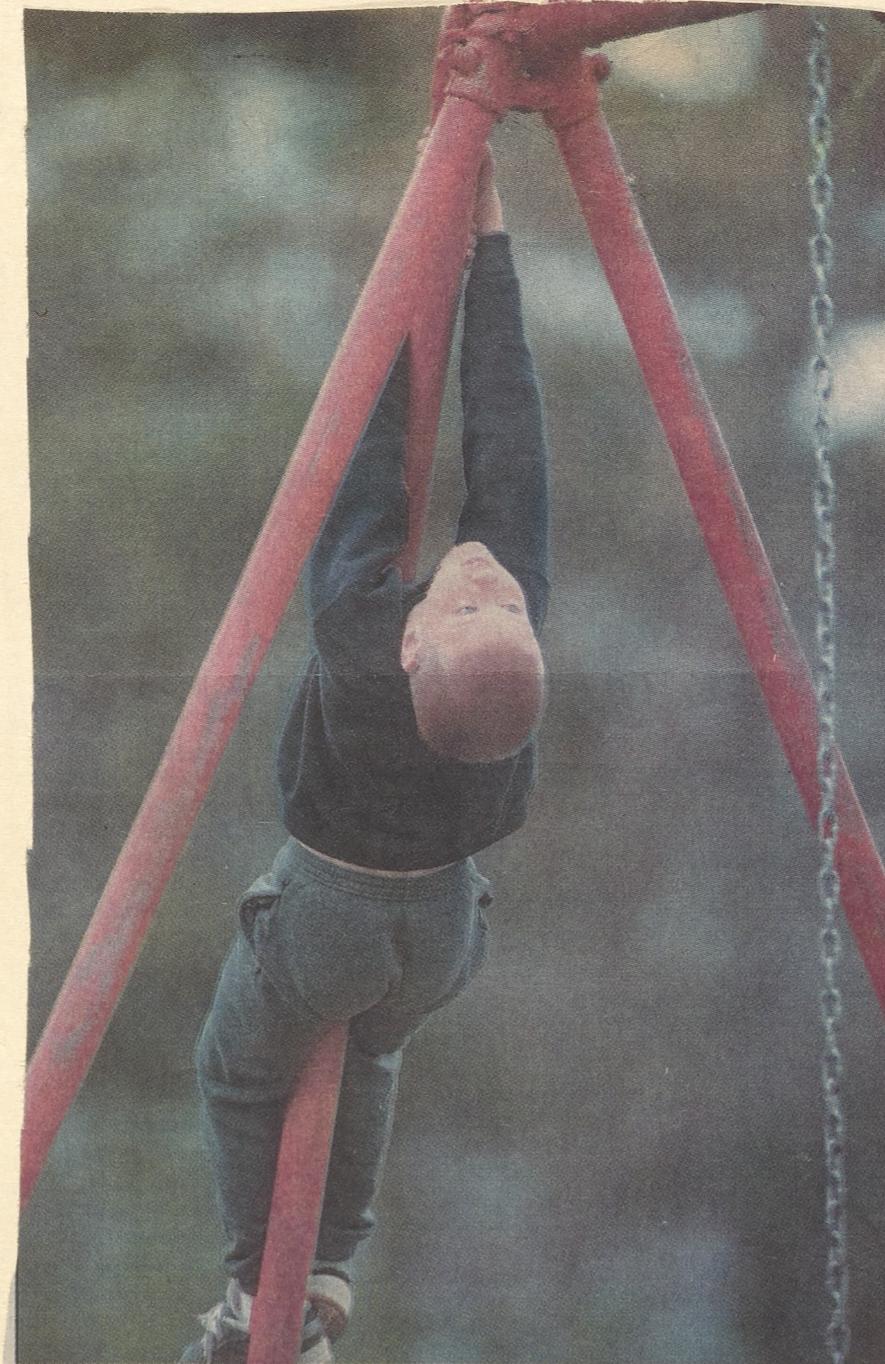
GE asserts that PCBs do not cause disease in humans.

In September 1998, in part because of public pressure generated by the disclosures that PCB fill had been distributed all over Pittsfield, GE agreed to a massive cleanup of its plant, the first two miles of the Housatonic River and associated lowlands. The agreement resulted from a year of negotiations with the DEP, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the city of Pittsfield, and 10 other state and federal agencies.

The EPA says the work will cost GE \$250 million to implement. GE says it can do the work for \$150 million.

The agreement defers a decision on the cleanup of the Housatonic River and its flood plains south of Pittsfield, which are also heavily contaminated with PCBs. The EPA says it will have completed necessary investigations and offer a cleanup plan in two or three years. But under the settlement agreement, GE will have the opportunity to go to court to block the plan.

Online readers who would like more information about the PCB contamination issue and the landmark Sept. 24 settlement between GE, the EPA, Pittsfield and other state and federal stakeholders can visit The Eagle's special PCB Report at www.newschoice.com/PCB.



Hang time
5/14/99
Kyle Litscher, 7, runs out of pole while climbing on the swings at Osceola Park in Pittsfield yesterday. His parents were watching a lacrosse game.

B6 — The Berkshire Eagle, Monday, April 19, 1999



Cool wheels

Kevin Cleary, in foreground, came from his Lenox home yesterday to try the half-pipe at the Pittsfield Common.

5/14/99
Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Park Square policy

The fountain that sprung back to life in Park Square earlier this month signals a revitalization of this historically significant tract.

City and state monies are funding an upgrade that will include landscaping, new benches and a designated walkway.

The infusion of fresh energy at this center city locale, however, also brings forward questions of what rules should regulate use of the park. Free speech and protection of the civic investment have clashed before and likely will again.

The park commission is forming a subcommittee to explore suitable policies to govern Park Square use. Between battles over creche displays and squawking over political activity, there's a lot of ground to be covered.

Park commissioners Sue Colker and James Conant have suggested that the content of events be considered when evaluating park use. This duo expressed concern earlier this month over the possibility of pickets during a union-sponsored event.

Commissioners Cliff Nilan and Tony Massimiano, on the other hand, have stayed away from content issues, suggesting a focus on consistency. Their principle goal has been to ensure that large-group or other physically damaging

gatherings be held at less fragile sites.

Given the sensitive issues at stake, the commission should make sure that the public has an opportunity to offer input.

Whatever the commission decides, there should be no impact on Pittsfield's tradition of varied political "stand outs."

These events — during which residents hold signs touting particular candidates or causes — have traditionally taken place on the sidewalks encircling the park, not the grass area that the commission regulates.

Publisher's Notebook

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continued from page 1

On Monday, June 7, the parks commission plans to take a walking tour of Park Square before an evening meeting, in order to have a better idea of how to proceed.

The parks director said that the idea of removing some trees was a part of the original plan, but officials hoped that simple pruning would be sufficient.

Mellace now believes that the construction period may be the ideal time to at least consider some tree thinning. The onset of spring, with greenery virtually enclosing the park, strengthened his resolve.

"Maybe the community needs to look at it and consider whether taking out a few trees should be part of this project," he said. "Pruning is still an option, I'm just not sure pruning will be enough."

Barry Architects Inc. of Pittsfield presented the park commissioners Monday night with early designs of a new bath

house at Pontoosuc Lake. According to Robert S. Mellace, director of community services, the structure will be simple, with changing areas, restroom facilities and a small storage space for maintenance equipment.

If more funds become available, an alternate plan includes the addition of a small concession area, a lifeguard structure and a park security office at the beach.

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house at Pontoosuc Lake. According to Robert S. Mellace, director of community services, the structure will be simple, with changing areas, restroom facilities and a small storage space for maintenance equipment.

Early estimates peg the project cost at about \$80,000, which will be funded by money set aside for such projects in the city's fiscal year 1997 capital budget.

The city has not had a budget for capi-

ties.

"We're hoping to put it out to bid maybe before the end of the year. Construction would probably start once the weather breaks in the spring," Mellace said yesterday.

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The city has not had a budget for capi-

ties.

"I see absolutely no sign of [Park

Square] being overcrowded with trees," Litty said. "And as far as the removal of trees goes, they'd have to come up with a more substantial reason than it's getting overcrowded to satisfy me."

Litty said that state law requires a posted notice on the tree and a public hearing before cutting a shade tree. The city, he charged, has disregarded this law in recent years.

"It's been completely ignored," he said. "They've done pretty much as they damn well please."

The shade tree commission chairman believes that the complaints over Park Square tree overgrowth have come from a small population. "Most of the complaints might be coming

from

people

who

are

there

for

the

Fourth

of

July

Parade

and

park

their

trucks

there

for

one

day," he said.

Prune, don't chop

Ward 5 city councilor Rick Scapin,

former park commission member,

favours tree pruning but draws the

line at cutting down trees.

"The park is getting hidden," he said, "but I don't believe in cutting trees. Some of those trees have been there for many years."

Park commissioner Sue Colker said

that she has not made up her mind on

the

issue

yet

and

plans

to

spend

more

time

in

the

park

before

deciding.

"I'm planning on going there on

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taking

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Park Square pruning proposal set for discussion on June 7

The Pittsfield Gazette May 27, 1999

17

Park Square pruning proposal set for discussion on June 7

continued from page 1

On Monday, June 7, the parks commission plans to take a walking tour of Park Square before an evening meeting, in order to have a better idea of how to proceed.

The parks director said that the idea of removing some trees was a part of the original plan, but officials hoped that simple pruning would be sufficient.

Mellace now believes that the construction period may be the ideal time to at least consider some tree thinning. The onset of spring, with greenery virtually enclosing the park, strengthened his resolve.

The parks director said that the idea of removing some trees was a part of the original plan, but officials hoped that simple pruning would be sufficient.

"Maybe the community needs to look at it and consider whether taking out a few trees should be part of this project," he said. "Pruning is still an option, I'm just not sure pruning will be enough."

Barry Architects Inc. of Pittsfield presented the park commissioners Monday night with early designs of a new bath

house at Pontoosuc Lake. According to Robert S. Mellace, director of community services, the structure will be simple, with changing areas, restroom facilities and a small storage space for maintenance equipment.

If more funds become available, an alternate plan includes the addition of a small concession area, a lifeguard structure and a park security office at the beach.

Barry Architects Inc. of Pittsfield presented the park commissioners Monday night with early designs of a new bath

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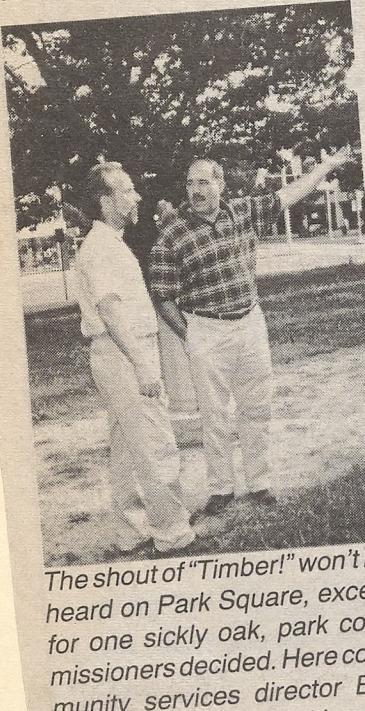
Early estimates peg the project cost at about \$80,000, which will be funded by money set aside for such projects in the city's fiscal year 1997 capital budget.

The city has not had a budget

Park Square trees will get trim, only

By Anthony Fyden

The city's parks commission is playing the role of a cautious barber, opting to give Park Square trees just a trim around the edges before adopting a new style.



The shout of "Timber!" won't be heard on Park Square, except for one sickly oak, park commissioners decided. Here community services director Bob Mellace talks trees with commissioner James Conant.

6/10/99 See PARK page 19



A refurbished Park Square, including pruning of trees, would encourage more residents to visit, some city officials believe. This group of art students, visiting from New York, sketched at the park recently.

Park Square pruning debated

continued from page 1

"They view this as park rehabilitation," rather than park restoration, Mellace said. "It's nobody's intention to obscure the park's character."

As commissioners strolled the square early Monday evening, most seemed to agree that the foliage is heavy, but favored caution. Sue Colker argued that the trees have been thriving for years and are now a part of the park's history.

"It took a long time for them to get that big," she said.

Commissioner James Conant countered with a less sentimental view. "Sue, in all honesty, what aesthetic value does it have?" he asked. "Some of these trees are already dead."

Conant added that the disease-resistant elm tree planned for the site may need extra room. "I just don't know how we expect a specimen elm tree to grow with all these competing types," he said.

The commission reached consensus on toppling just one tree; an oak on the park's southwest side that appears to be dying. But rather than removing other healthy trees, the board opted for extensive branch trimming and pruning.

If, after the pruning, the park still appears overgrown, cutting can be reconsidered. "We'll look at what we have left and see how full it still is," said commission chairman Cliff Nilan.

City councilor Rick Scapin, a former park commission member, to begin in late August.

walked the square with the other officials and agreed that prudent pruning is the proper course.

"It really is overgrown in here," he said. "But I'm against cutting trees. Some of them have probably been here for a long time. They're a part of the history of this place."

Concerned citizen Edward Parent stopped by to voice his views to the gathered city officials. Parent said that better tree management — throughout the city as well as at Park Square — is needed. Not enough thought goes into choosing which types of trees should be planted and to caring for the trees, he believes.

With better management, Parent said, an adequate sight line could be maintained.

"I think they should be pruned," he said. "But if [a tree is] diseased, of course it should be cut."

All of the gathered commissioners voiced support for removal of the shrubs that surround the Park Square fountain, which was restored to working order earlier this year. According to Peter Bell of Berkshire Design Group, the shrub will be replaced with a more attractive and lower-growing variety, which will increase the fountain's visibility.

Following the Park Square walking tour, the commission retired to Springside House to formalize their decision. The board voted unanimously to reject tree cutting in favor of extensive pruning.

The park renovations are expected

Park Square, Coltsville top accident list

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — There were more accidents at the Park Square roundabout and the Coltsville intersection between 1990 and 1997 than anywhere else in the county north of the Massachusetts Turnpike, according to a report by a state highway department consultant.

The study, performed by Rizzo Associates and released to the public last month, is one of the backdrops to the state's latest effort to resolve long-standing traffic problems north of the turnpike.

"The accident data is a pretty graphic illustration of at least one of the problems the study is meant to address," said Nathaniel Karns, the executive director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. "And that's the ability of the existing infrastructure to deal with the traffic. Certainly it's not a new problem."

In all, 46 of the 56 top accident locations, or 82 percent, are in Pittsfield. Traffic accidents claimed five lives in the study area during the eight-year span. Four of those were in Pittsfield.

Karns suggested the prevalence of Pittsfield locations on the list is partly due to higher traffic volumes in the county's largest city and transportation hub, and partly to aging infrastructure.

"We essentially have roads that were constructed and built a century ago, in some cases," said Karns. "They're carrying a lot of traffic, and the highest traffic volume is around Pittsfield. This may be a sign of an infrastructure at the breaking point as far as

ACCIDENTS, continued on A5
7/10/99

Accidents from A1

what it's capable of handling."

The high number of accidents on North Street, for example, may be a sign of a road trying to fill too many roles. In an ideal world, he said, residents follow local access streets first to collector routes and then to the major arterials, which have limited access.

"Maybe North Street is trying to be all three things, and you may not be able to do that in a safe and efficient manner," he said.

The Rizzo study found that 242 accidents occurred in Park Square from 1990 to 1997, at a rate of 2.1 accidents per million vehicles.

The three-lane roundabout is clearly no drive in the park, as it accepts traffic from four major arterials and one local access road, handling traffic bound for Routes 7, 20, 8 and 9 as well as the downtown shopping district.

At No. 2 on the list, Coltsville saw 192 accidents during that period, at a rate of 1.6 per million vehicles. Another 67 crashes occurred at the nearby intersection of Route 9 and the Allendale Shopping Center, which came in at number 14.

The study also found that 6 of the top 11 high accident locations involved either North Street or First Street in downtown Pittsfield.

The location with the highest frequency of accidents was the intersection of Elizabeth and Henry streets, one block south of West Housatonic Street, which saw 3.2 crashes per million vehicles. Thirty-six accidents occurred at that intersection from 1990 to 1997, placing it 51st on the list of 56.

The only two non-Pittsfield sites in the top 20 were the intersection of Routes 7 and 20 in Lenox at No. 3, the Hadley Overpass at Main Street in North Adams, at No. 10, and the intersection of South and Main streets in Dalton at No. 13.

Fatal accidents were recorded at the following accident-prone Pittsfield intersections: The northern intersection of North Street and Wahconah Street, at First Street and Penn Street, at Linden Street and Francis Avenue, and at South Street and Dan Fox Drive. The only non-Pittsfield traffic fatality on the list was at Route 7 and Route 20 in Lenox.

A number of other traffic fatalities that occurred in the study area between 1990 and 1997 were not represented in the study because they did not occur in accident-prone locations.

7/10/99

— The Berkshire Eagle, Tuesday, October 5, 1999



Shannon DeCelle / Berkshire Eagle Staff
10/5/99

Walking in the rain
A spectator at Clapp Park takes a walk up the hill in the rain. Pittsfield received three-quarters of an inch of rain from yesterday's showers.

'Dog park' proposed for Pittsfield

Former councilor suggests designating city site for canine residents

Fido and Spot may soon have a place to frolic in Pittsfield.

Sheila LaBarbera, a former city councilor and current dog owner, has proposed that the city create a designated dog park.

"This is just a preliminary type of thing," said LaBarbera. "I'm proposing we look at having a dog park... to let people get out there and exercise their dogs."

LaBarbera made her suggestion during Monday's park commission meeting, receiving mixed encouragement from commissioners.

"I think it's worth looking into," said Cliff Nilan.

"It makes a lot of sense," said Robert Smith.

James Conant isn't sure: "I'd need to see more of a mass of people interested."

LaBarbera distributed a handout citing similar facilities in California,

Oregon and Florida. She plans to form an informal group to study the concept.

A dog park, she suggested, might include a general walking area and a fenced-in area where animals could be unleashed.

Smith said that since people ignore bans on dogs in most parks, the concept could fill a need. "A lot of people who run their dogs in the regular parks say they do so because there is nowhere else," he said.

Community services director Bob Mellace said the idea might present some problems but that the current situation with dogs in parks is also problematic.

"The No. 1 complaint we get here [at the parks department] is unleashed dogs and dog waste," said Mellace.

Commission members raised concerns about several aspects of the

dog park concept including possible fighting among canines; the safety of people and small dogs; supervision; and the possible accumulation of large amounts of waste.

Conant said that the parks department's resources are already stretched too thin to add new demands. "We have other parks in decline," he said.

LaBarbera said perhaps a volunteer committee could oversee the dog park. She noted that communities that have built one dog park have found them so popular that they've added more facilities.

LaBarbera will now attempt to form a small committee to explore the concept, working with Mellace to review possible sites should the idea advance. After further research, LaBarbera may bring forward recommendations to the commission at a later date.

The Pittsfield Gazette August 5, 1999

Study of Springside Pond approved

By Kelly O'Callaghan
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — A study of neglected Springside Pond will soon be under way.

A firm from Greenfield has submitted a proposal to create a plan to refurbish the pond area, which was once frequently used for recreation. Dufresne-Henry of Greenfield was the only firm to respond to the city's advertisement for a restoration plan. It proposes to charge \$15,000 for the work.

Pittsfield received a \$10,000 grant from the state Department of Environmental Management in late spring to restore two ponds at Springside Park: Springside Pond and Stevens Pond, which is situated farther inside the park.

The award requires matching funds from the city.

According to Robert S. Mellace, Pittsfield's director of community services, the pond management plan for Springside will begin with a study of the watershed that feeds the two ponds.

"If we don't address issues upstream, sediment will keep washing into the pond," Mellace said.

The study will also involve a waterfront improvement plan, which could include picnic areas and walkways in the park.

"A lot of people in the city have commented to me that they remember the pond being used heavily. Now it's really a neglected and forgotten pond," Mellace said. "We're not trying to get it back to swimming quality again, but we want it to be a resource again."

The plan will help identify funding programs the city could pursue as it tries to implement the plan in the future.

"I have a feeling it's going to be fairly expensive. We'll take it piece by piece if we have to," Mellace said.

The Park Commission intends to hold public meetings through

10/7/99

out the study process to allow the public to review the plans, he added.

"It is a nice resource," Mellace said of Springside Pond, mentioning the quaint stone bridge over the water and the park's prime location.

The study is part of a larger effort to improve the entire park.

City may prune Park Square

Officials contemplate removing some trees at central city landmark

By Anthony Fyden

Late this summer, Park Square will undergo a nearly \$250,000 facelift.

The city's parks department is — oh, so gently — suggesting that perhaps if some trees were removed from the downtown park, residents may be able to better appreciate the refurbishment.

Community services director Robert Mellace realizes that cutting down trees is an emotional issue for many people. In fact, he considered not bringing the issue up at all.

"Everyone knows how sensitive people are about Park Square," Mellace said. "I just felt that I really needed to bring the issue forward and let it play out."

The planned improvements will give the site a fresh look. New walkways will be added, with pedestrian-friendly brick and concrete surfaces. Period lighting and benches will be added, matching the style used at nearby City Hall Plaza.

Fixtures such as the sundial and the Civil War Monument will be cleaned. Ironically, one of the main additions to the site will be the plant



A preliminary plan to remove some trees at Park Square has quietly emerged. Community services director Bob Mellace says selective removal could enhance the park, but shade tree commission chairman William Litty is critical of the city's recent tree-trimming efforts.

ing of a tree — a replacement of the legendary Pittsfield Elm that graced the park in the 1800s, earning mention in the literature of Herman Melville.

The Park Square fountain has already been repaired and has begun flowing for the first time in several years.

But a looming debate over the oak

"After going out there and walking

See PARK page 17

Save the trees in Park Square

Talk Back is a column of reader observations. To reach the Talk Back line and leave your comment on the answering machine, call 496-6202.

I would like to submit my top five reasons to keep the trees in Park Square in Pittsfield: It has taken them 40 years to get this big. They only have leaves six months out of the year anyway. They provide some measure of protection and privacy to those of us who do walk that route. If people driving through Pittsfield want to see the view, they should stop and get out of their cars — Park Square is no place for out-of-town drivers to be looking around and not paying attention to traffic. Finally, those trees provide oxygen, and you do not cut down oxygen. With all the pollution those ears spew forth on a hot, still summer afternoon, we better have something there making clean air.

This will be a quick, simple comment — please leave the trees at Park Square alone.

I have two general comments concerning the local area. First, please leave Park Square alone. Do not make it look as it did 100 years ago, because that stuff ends up as junk after a while. Second, it is a sin that Route 7 & 20 was left the way it was for four days over the Memorial Day holiday by Petrica. It was a death trap out there. Think of all the people who came in over the holiday to see the Berkshires. I do not think they will make a second trip to the Berkshires this summer if they have to be stuck in all that construction.

Park Square makeover

By Theo Stein

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The city is preparing to spruce up historic Park Square by installing better walkways and landscape improvements that might include the removal of a few trees on the well-shaded green.

Robert Mellace, Pittsfield's director of community services, said the \$225,000 project, set to begin later this summer, will be up for discussion at the June 7 Parks Commission meeting.

While most of the project involves the installation of period lighting, benches, new walkways, granite paving stones near the monuments and sundial, Mellace acknowledged that the proposed changes to the treescape might generate the most discussion.

Half the money for the project has come from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

"They have some fairly strict guidelines on what you can spend the money on," he said. "They want to keep it in historical context."

At the turn of the century, the historic square was home to a large number of tall elms — including the famous Pittsfield elm — that lifted their canopies into the sky, allowing views underneath.

Now the small green is treed with sugar maples, red maples and red oaks, whose low-hanging limbs obscure the park's features to passers-by.

"Let's face it, most people see the park by car window," Mellace said Friday. "It's the most aesthetic part of downtown. What we want is to give it a more open appearance."

At the very least, Mellace said, the park's trees are in for a good

SQUARE, continued on B6



Theo Stein / Berkshire Eagle Staff
Public input will be sought concerning an improvement project for Park Square that could include removal of some trees.

Park Square pruning planned

By Theo Stein

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Park commissioners have recommended the removal of one cramped oak from historic Park Square, followed by a good pruning of the remaining 17 trees, as part of a \$225,000 refurbishing scheduled for this summer.

"It's an emotional issue," said Commissioner James Conant of the proposed tree removal during a site visit to the 25,000-square-foot green Monday night.

The commissioners unanimously agreed that the treed green is now just a bit too leafy.

"In their haste to replace the elms

they took down 25 years ago, they went for numbers," said Conant. Since then, the maples, oaks and shrubbery have grown to the point where they obscure views into the little park from the encircling rotary, the most common vantage point, said Robert S. Mellace, the director of community services.

The black marble Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the northeast corner of the park, for example, is almost completely shaded by low-hanging limbs and a robust evergreen shrub.

Conant wondered if there was even room for a specimen elm called for in the park improvement plan.

"A little selective pruning would be smart," he said.

6/9/99 TREES, continued on B4

Trees from B1

sandwiched between two robust sugar maples on the park's southwest curve. In the competition for growing space, the oak has lost, though other oaks in the square are thriving.

Likewise, said Wells, a yard-high yew hedge surrounding the park's centerpiece fountain will be replaced by a hedge of dwarf yews that will not grow as tall. Another hedge will hide the square concrete vaults on the fountain's north side.

A dozen metal lath benches will be installed, eight around the fountain and two each on the main east-west walk, as well as period lighting like that in nearby

Dunham Mall

The stone dust walks are set to be replaced by a "concrete aggregate" walk, a stone-rich cement mix similar to walks in historic Williamsburg, Va.

A specimen elm, a reminder of the park's grand elms that succumbed to Dutch elm disease decades ago, will be planted in the center of the west walk, where the sundial is now. The elm will be a disease-resistant variety. A ring of granite paving stones will encircle the base of the tree. The sundial will be moved to the well-shaded south walk.

Half of the money for the project has come from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Mellace said the project will begin later this summer.

6/17/99

Police probing gunfire incident at Tucker Park

By Tony Dobrowolski

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Pittsfield Police are investigating a disturbance at Tucker Park Wednesday night in which gunshots reportedly were fired.

Police Capt. Cosmo Spezzaferrro said witnesses told police they heard three shots fired, reportedly at 6:41 p.m. Tucker Park is located at the intersection of Linden Street and Robbins Avenue.

Spezzaferrro said witnesses reported seeing two black males driving a green, four-door Chevrolet Blazer down Robbins Avenue after the incident occurred. Another black male was reported running north on Daniels Avenue.

Officers found a 9-mm shell casing in the park's playground area. Spezzaferrro said a .40-caliber shell casing was also found at the scene.

6/4/99

Square from B1

pruning. And the city intends to ask a landscape consultant whether a few less trees would make for a nicer spot.

One example can be found at the northeast end of the park, where the Vietnam Veterans Memorial monument is closely flanked by an oak and a maple. Their overhanging branches almost completely shroud the black marble monument.

Another example: The city spent about \$30,000 last year to renovate the park fountain, which is obscured from the street by a tall yew hedge.

"So we intend to take out those yews and replace them with something less prominent," he said.

"A lot of people have commented that Park Square has a closed-in feeling," he said. "In some places, the tops of the trees are starting to grow into each other and compete with each other."

Peter Lafayette, president of Berkshire Housing Development Corp. and a member of Downtown Pittsfield Inc.'s operating committee, said the committee was "pretty much universally" in favor of opening up the park to outside views.

"It's a wonderful spot," he said. "It's one of the first things people

see when they come into town. It should be highlighted, not hidden. People should enjoy it and be able to see it."

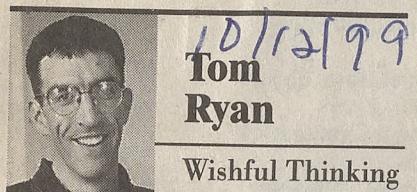
Mellace stressed that no decision has been made to cut any trees. "We're having a discussion," he said. "This is what it's all about. Obviously, if we are going to cut any trees, we want to have the public's input."

Walter Litty, the chairman of the city's shade tree commission, could not be reached for comment.

Lafayette pointed south to Lee for a comparison. "Look at the park in downtown Lee," he said. "They've really taken a chain saw to it, and knocked down a large number of trees. It's kind of shocking when you first look at it, but now you can see the park, which is kind of nice."

With all the disturbance scheduled for later in the summer, Mellace said the time to think about how the park will look in 10 years is now.

"We have no desire to change the character of the park," he said. "We're basically talking about a face-lift. But if you stand in the park, ask what it will look like in five or 10 years and come to the conclusion that something needs to be done, we want to do it now."



Tom
Ryan

Wishful Thinking

City fields have failed the athletes of Pittsfield

PITTSFIELD There has been much talk over the past three years about building a baseball facility in order to keep a minor league franchise in this city. Originally an opponent of such a thought, I have since become an advocate of that possibility.

Throughout this debate, though, I have wondered why the collective voices of another group in this city have not been heard. That group would be our local baseball and softball coaches, who play on fields that are sub-standard by any definition.

At St. Joseph's, Russ Quetti's baseball team calls Deming Park home. If you are not familiar with Deming, then you are not familiar with Pittsfield's own Green Monster.

Those pine trees, some 275 feet away in left field, have felt the wrath of many a baseball, even more so in recent years with the ping supplied by aluminum bats.

Right field, meanwhile, never seems to end. Deming Park was made for wooden bats and dead baseballs. When St. Joseph's came home a home game in the Western Mass. tournament this past spring, Quetti opted instead to play at Wahconah Park. It's not hard to figure out why.

Bob Moynihan's Pittsfield High Generals have been calling Clapp Park home for many years. Too many if you ask me.

My biggest knock on Clapp Park is the track in left field that can turn singles into home runs. That track was once used for high school track and field meets, but hasn't been in several years.

Why can't it be dug up and resodded, like the infield was? And even then the infield will probably decay into its previous look unless it receives constant maintenance.

Have you ever seen a water sprinkler on that field? I haven't either. Another spring and summer like we just had and that field is toast.

The other problem is that the fence in right was moved in to allow for the driveway behind it. That fence has taken the challenge away from left-handed pull hitters.

What used to be pretty good is now a little more than a pop fly.

And what about Taconic? This field wasn't even a field 20 years ago. I can't remember where Taconic played, but I know they didn't play at the high school.

When Taconic baseball coach Kevin Stannard goes to the plate for the pre-game informational exchange with the other coach and umpires, he needs 20 minutes to go over the ground rules.

The foot bridge in left is in play, but over it is a home run. The hill, which stretches from left to center, is in play. Right field turns into a marsh after 330 feet. I've seen outfielders go in there and never come back.

There is also an issue with the softball fields. While Taconic plays some of its games at home (on a field that is not big enough for a whiffle ball game), the two other city schools play at the Berkshire County Softball Complex. Taconic plays its night games at the site.

Alcohol is not sold on site until the high school games are over. But often, especially at night, there are men's league games going on at the same time.

This isn't the fault of the Complex. But the high schools shouldn't have to compromise the agenda at the site. It's an awkward mix of young and old. And it's hardly what some would call a high school environment.

Another problem at the is that the Complex field is too big, and a ball in the gap turns into a home run.

What drives me nuts about this is that a few years ago the city built two softball fields at the top of Benedict Road.

Great. Now, the not so great. Those fields were built for the Pittsfield youth slow pitch teams, a league that is in operation for all of six weeks of the summer. If the fences had been put up at an appropriate distance, say another 30 feet back, then they would be perfect for high school use as well.

What I'm getting at is this. What this city really needs, is an up-to-date high school facility for both sports.

And Wahconah Park is not the answer.

Wahconah Park is, and always will be, a facility for summer baseball.

RYAN, continued on C3



Eagle Archives

Then & Now

Despite the cold, a band of youngsters, above, make the most of climbing a jungle gym in Pittsfield's First Street Common in 1961. Styles in clothing and play structures change, but kids still enjoy climbing, as they were doing Tuesday, left, in the same place.

The Common was designated a public park in 1883 after years of neglect as a town owned dumping ground. The 1883 town meeting voted \$1,500 to improve the site and further investments in trees, walks and playing grounds were made over the years. It served as an athletic field when the old high school (now housing for the elderly) was built in 1896. A provision of the land's reclamation as a park in 1883 was that no charge should ever be made for its use and no admission fees charged for events staged there.



Photo by Joel Librizzi/Berkshire Eagle Staff

10/12/99

4 — The Berkshire Eagle, Wednesday, October 20, 1999



Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Putting the pieces together

Workers from Mountain View Construction of Chicopee work this week on the curb replacement taking place around Park Square in Pittsfield.

Ryan from C1 10/12/99

just waiting for someone to come along with a plan. Then construct a facility that could be used eight months out of the year. Those fields are begging to be used.

Pittsfield needs to use the resources that it has. Good intentions are fine, but a well-crafted plan with a vision not just for the future but for the present would be the way to go.

Here's another thought. Take out those lights, which are not adequate for baseball anyway and truck them out to the Berkshire Community College campus, where acres of land are

11/21/99

Park Square face lift isn't enough

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:

Are my local tax dollars paying for the restoration of Park Square? Or did Pittsfield receive matching state funds for this project? Someone is footing the bill, and I don't like it.

What disturbs me is the same problem I encounter with my health insurance provider. They will not cover expenses for cosmetic surgery. Restoring Park Square is exactly that — cosmetic. So, as a "provider", I'm against it. I'm not suggesting a triple bypass, but our city's health is in serious condition: Giving Park Square a face lift does little for Pittsfield's quick and full recovery.

If roadways are the arteries to commerce, then Park Square needs a complete redesign in its traffic flow. I've driven around many rotaries in my lifetime — ours is an accident waiting to happen; not just a fender-bender, but someone getting killed because of the confusion of merging lanes and trucks everywhere causing blind spots. I live and work here. I can only imagine what the tourists must be thinking.

My solution will cost money. But if we can pave the road in front of City Hall with bricks, and find the cash to repair a fountain that seldom operates (while city officials give themselves one raise after another), perhaps the money to fix Park Square's traffic problem is sitting in an account in one of the five million banking institutions located throughout Pittsfield. It's time our leadership showed the same high levels of energy and commitment towards this ongoing traffic problem as they show to staying in office.

Here's my solution: Eliminate rotary traffic altogether. Install the necessary lights, put up easy-to-see signs, extend Park Square east to First Street. And yes,

restore traffic flow between North and South Streets — straight through, both directions, as it was a long time ago. Make it a four-way intersection, adding right on red arrows at each one.

I don't know why this corrective measure hasn't already been done. Is it because our city fathers are now ashamed, having allowed the deterioration of downtown to progress to its present sorry state, that a direct North/South artery would expose the folly of their short-termed decision-making over the years? I believe the reason North Street is such an eyesore is because businesses up and down our "Main Street" have been denied the necessary traffic flow to remain competitive and healthy. But, we're going to get a spiffed up Park Square, that's for certain. Amazing how the money's set aside, or wasted, depending on your definition of "Pittsfield Proud".

If my taxes are paying for this Park Square sprucing, then let's do it right: Get rid of that foolish fountain that never seems to be working, and commission a real artist to create a unique sculpture in its place — something that says we are serious about our city. Make it a cultural statement, unlike the sunken ship in Coltsville. And then, before the Colonial Theatre opens its doors, maybe wiser heads will prevail on the more pressing issue of improving our downtown economic well-being. Fix the traffic flow at Park Square, or bust!

And while the Department of Public Works is at it, please send a road crew out to the intersection of South Street and East Housatonic — the "n" in right turn only is backwards. Thanks.

JAN ORFE

Pittsfield, Nov. 14, 1999

City looks into costs to repair ballpark

By Greg Sukiennik

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The city is still in the market for a new stadium or a renovation of Wahconah Park, and has received preliminary estimates for replacement lights and grandstand seating.

Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. said yesterday it is still premature to comment on potential sites.

"We're investigating several possibilities, including renovation of Wahconah Park," he said. While he noted that "a lot of it depends on a team," he also said the facility would be a multipurpose stadium that would also serve other sports and outdoor events.

National Pastime Co., the owner of the New York-Penn League franchise that has played here since 1989, has submitted its option for the 2000 season to the city Board of Park Commissioners, which will vote on the matter next Monday, Nov. 15.

National Pastime may also exercise an option for the 2001 season. But at the end of the 2000 New York-Penn League, the franchise's player development contract with the New York Mets will end. Through the franchise is guaranteed another team, the condition of Wahconah Park has long been a concern of club President William Gladstone and of the New York-Penn League and, according to Gladstone, may be a factor when major league clubs decide whether to send their young players here.

In the meantime, city Director of Community Services Robert S. Mellace has received preliminary estimates on the cost of replacing grandstand seats and lights in the 80-year-old park and its 40-year-old grandstand. But those estimates do not take into account a number of unknowns, which could raise the price of both, he warned.

New lighting could cost between \$160,000 and \$180,000, Mellace said, including a 10-year warranty on the new equipment. But the installation of new lights might require additional electrical work and repairs, which would affect the price tag. The current lights were installed in the mid-1970s, when the park was refurbished with federal dollars.

11/9/99

Ballpark from B1

\$250,000 for 2,000 seats, delivered and installed. If the city bought reconditioned used seats instead, those costs would be \$105,000 for a 1,500-seat grandstand and \$140,000 for 2,000 seats, delivered and installed.

However, Mellace cautioned, those estimates do not take into account the current condition of the Wahconah grandstand, or whether the new seats would require additional repairs to the structure. The infrastructure of the grandstand was repaired as part of a \$300,000 improvement project in 1997.

New lighting could cost between \$160,000 and \$180,000, Mellace said, including a 10-year warranty on the new equipment. But the installation of new lights might require additional electrical work and repairs, which would affect the price tag. The current lights were installed in the mid-1970s, when the park was refurbished with federal dollars.

BALLPARK, continued on B4

11/9/99

Park skates into controversy

By Anthony Fyden

The city's skateboard park at the First Street Common opened last September with much fanfare, touted as a safe alternative to street skating and a response to a growing sport.

But some city councilors are now saying that park has become a source of trouble.

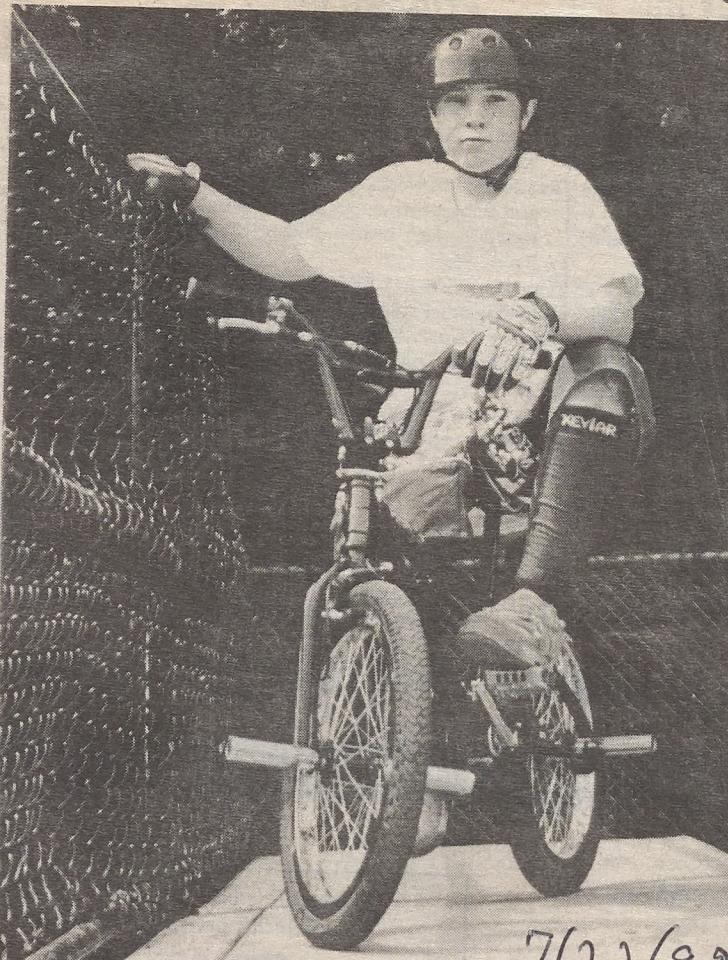
Ward 1 councilor William Barry and at-large councilor Jamie Williamson have co-filed a petition calling for stepped-up police presence at the park.

Recently, several councilors and the police department have received complaints... regarding inappropriate activities in the area," the petition reads. "It is our responsibility to work together to ensure that all measures possible have been taken to ensure the safety of our youth while they enjoy the benefits of our parks."

And Ward 5 councilor Rick Scapin — an advocate for the park while a member of the park commission — expressed disappointment in the behavior of the teens who use the site.

"It saddens me to think that it hasn't worked out the way I thought it would," he said. "We had hoped that the kids were going to police it themselves; it's too bad because I thought it would work."

See SKATEBOARD page 9



The skateboard park at the First Street Common is used nearly as often by cyclists, like William Chatham, as it is by skaters. Some people say the park has become a magnet for trouble as well.

See SKATEBOARD page 9

The Pittsfield Gazette July 22, 1999

New park now used more by bicyclists than skateboarders

continued from page 1

Scapin has heard reports of fights, disturbances of neighbors and conflicts between park users. He now supports the call for a greater police presence.

"I didn't hear a lot about it [when the park first opened] but what I have heard is yes, there have been problems down there," he said. "It's unfortunate because it's a great thing for the kids but we do need to step up enforcement."

Despite the troubling reports, Scapin remains optimistic that problems can be addressed. A uniformed police patrol, he feels, would make a difference. "Once you establish a police presence in there, things change quickly," he said. "I don't see why our police department, even though I know they're super busy,

couldn't go down there if it's such a serious problem."

Former at-large councilor Peter Arlos believes that the secluded location of the park makes trouble inevitable. "Skateboarding is a show-off sport," he said. "It has to be in view. It was obvious that there was going to be trouble."

Arlos said that he recently received a call from a woman who reported that a skateboarder was brandishing a gun in the park. "It's really out of control," he said.

Ward 2 city councilor Tim DiSilva also worries that the location — the park is located in a back corner of the park, nearly hidden from First Street — encourages trouble.

"I have a feeling that it's a decision

at all. It's almost set up so that it's going to allow problems."

On Wednesday afternoon, the park appeared quiet enough, although it is looking slightly ragged for being less than one year old. Several obstacles and ramps are marred by graffiti.

A sign detailing the skate park rules had also been heavily spray painted with an ironic touch since the rules appear to be widely ignored. Only a few among the 8-10 teens at the park were wearing required helmets.

Another rule which appears to be ignored is the prohibition of bicycles. In fact, most teens at the park were riding bikes instead of wearing skates. In the middle of the 100 by 100 foot park someone has set up a wooden bicycle ramp — definitely not part of the original equipment

and of questionable quality — which for nearly two years to get the park built. He noted that many among the original group no longer use the park because they now attend college or, like him, have summer jobs that cut into spare time.

Denat says that problems have been minimal. "I don't think there's a lot of conflicts," he said. "We're all here for the same thing."

The teen noted that police officers occasionally visit the park. "They come around here just to see if someone's up to no good," he said.

When asked why many skaters still use sidewalks and streets for skating, Chatham said that skaters like to show their skills. "Street skating is much more fun than park skating, there's no doubt," he said. "People, the public, they don't like it as much as the skaters though."

City gets late start on park facelift

By Kelly O'Callaghan

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The improvement of Park Square has begun, with a good pruning of nearly 20 trees earlier this week.

"We pruned them to keep them healthy and to limb them up, and give a little more visibility into the park," said Robert S. Mellace, director of community services.

Though the major pruning may give the impression of the removal of several trees, the improvement plan only calls for the removal of one cramped oak from the property, Mellace said.

The restoration of the park includes new concrete walks, decorative stones, new benches, period lighting and significant landscaping improvements.

The improvements were supposed to start in earnest this week, but Mellace said the schedule has been pushed back by about three weeks because of the rainy cold weather earlier this week and because of additions to the original plan.

"We're going to try to accomplish as much as we can before the snow flies," Mellace said. "But this will definitely spill over into next spring."

Now that the trees are pruned, the contractors, Mountainview Landscapes and Lawncare Inc., will begin to reconstruct the sidewalk that encircles the park. That improvement was not on the original bid, and has pushed back the first schedule for the project.

Cost increases

It also increased the cost, from \$225,000 to \$258,000. However, half of the project is being funded by a matching grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

PARK, continued on B4
10/8/99

Park 10/8/99

The workers will leave the section of sidewalk by the entrance of the park untouched until the very end, so that they have a means of entering and exiting the park with their equipment without damaging the new sidewalk.

"It's supposed to be totally done in about nine weeks," Mellace said, adding that he will soon be receiving a revised schedule.

After that, workers will have to install underground electrical lines, do the concrete and granite work, lay sod, add site improvements such as benches and trash receptacles, and finish the landscaping. The landscape work may be delayed until spring.

"I'm optimistic that the project will go forward as smoothly as possible," Mellace said. "We should start seeing some increased activity, if not the kind of substantial improvements bound to be needed are to be made.

Taking back our ponds

Undertaking a study for how to restore the sadly neglected Springside Pond of Springside Park in Pittsfield is a good idea that is likely to reap rewards for neighborhood residents. The pond management plan is part of a larger effort to improve the entire park and will also involve a waterfrom improvement plan which could include picnic areas and walkways in the park. Providing improved public places for outdoor recreation can often greatly enhance a neighborhood. Fortunately Pittsfield's director of community services, Robert S. Mellace, has wisely instructed the firm which is developing the refurbishment plan to also identify funding programs the city could pursue as it tries to implement the plan in the future — a contingency surely to be needed if the kind of substantial improvements bound to be needed are to be made.

10/8/99

Councilors lament ATVs at city parks

All-terrain vehicles don't belong at city parks, a group of councilors declared on Monday.

Members of the ordinances & rules subcommittee sent the parks commission a petition calling for a ban on ATVs at city parks.

Ward 1 councilor Bill Barry said he recently attended a baseball game at Springside Park when ATV riders "started buzzing the game."

Ward 5 councilor Rick Scapin noted that city parks already have signs posted banning motorized vehicles.

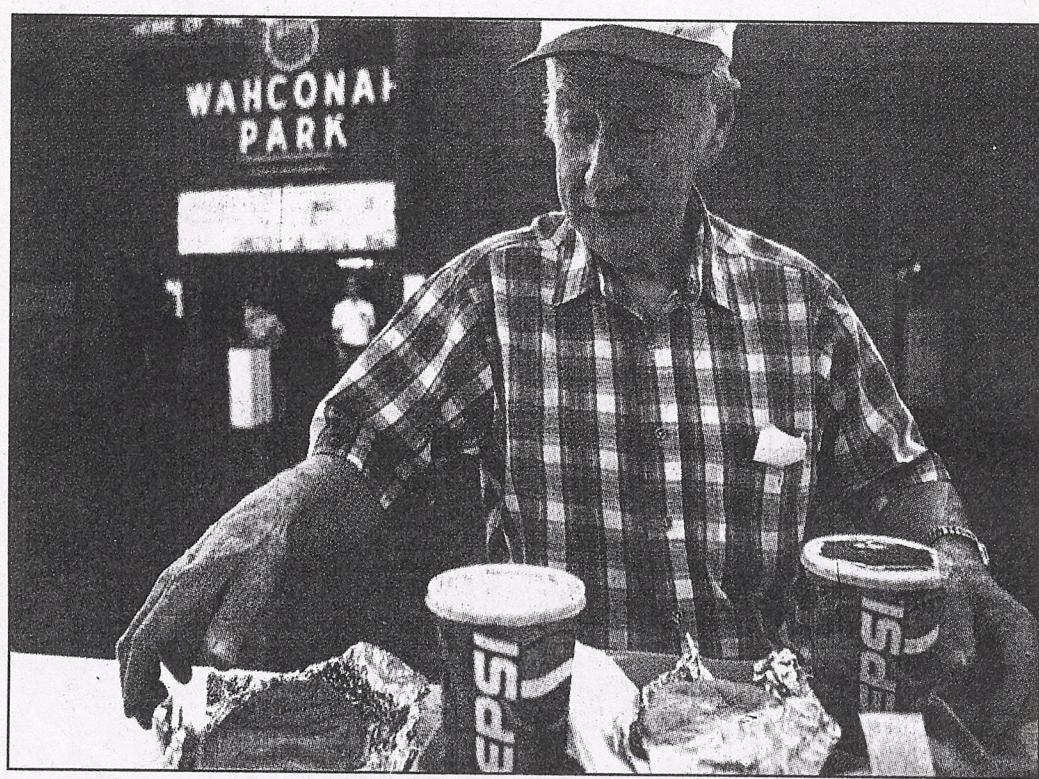
"The biggest problem," added Ward 4 councilor Gary Grunin, "is enforcement. The all-terrain vehicles tear up the fields."

At Barry's request, the issue was referred to the parks board for further review. In addition, the councilor asked that the city solicitor's office explore ways to address the ATV problem.

Parks get deserved attention

The city of Pittsfield deserves praise for its ambitious plans to restore and improve five community parks. In a bid to make up for the fact that the city has not had a budget for capital expenditures since 1997, Robert Mellace, the Director of Community Affairs, has put together a preliminary capital budget for the Parks Department worth \$1.4 million for spiffing up the parks and making infrastructure improvements. If the expenditures are approved as part of the new fiscal budget, Pittsfield residents could be enjoying improved ball fields, playgrounds, restrooms, picnicking and swimming areas in their parks as early as next summer. This improvement is long overdue.

10/22/99



Pittsfield Mets fan Art Driscoll packs up a couple of hamburgers at the refreshment stand before last night's game against the Vermont Expos.

Mayor pledges new park if club promises to stay

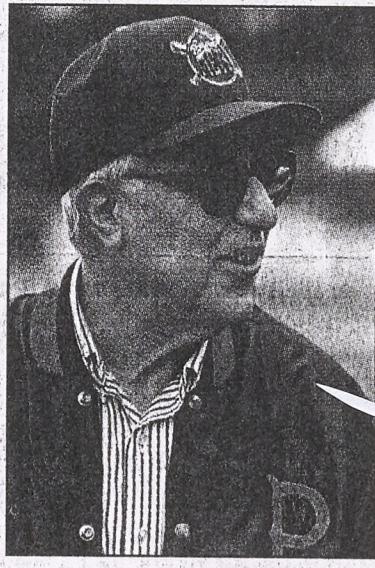
By Greg Sukiennik and Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. said yesterday the city would spend millions on a new stadium if it had a long-term commitment from a baseball franchise for such a facility.

That statement came days after William L. Gladstone, president of National Pastime Co., which owns the Pittsfield Mets, said he would sign a long-term commitment if such improvements were made.

"Why would I want to invest \$6 [million] or \$8 million in a stadium when I have no guarantee that

In 1996, a similar deal was



William L. Gladstone

struck between the city and National Pastime: Build a stadium, the team said, and we will sign a lease to play there for at least 10 years. But the deal fell through when the city couldn't live up to its end of the bargain.

Now the city has a lease with the Mets that runs through this season, with a promise that the club will play here next year and another one-year option for 2001. Beyond that, the future for both entities remains uncertain.

But neither side has approached the other about such a commitment.

In 1996, a similar deal was

METS, continued on A4

Workers prepare Wahconah Park before last night's game with Vermont.

Mets from A1

there'll be anyone to play in it?" Doyle asked yesterday. "If [the Mets or any team] come along and want a 10-year-deal, we'll talk about it."

Doyle again said he is committed to minor league baseball, and to making improvements to Wahconah Park, regardless of the team situation. Those improvements could include paved parking, expanded concession stands, individual grandstand seats (replacing the current bench seats), new bleachers and a replacement for the 25-year-old lighting system.

He also cited the improvements the city made before the season began at the club's request, including realignment of the lights, and the replacement of racoon-proof roofs in the concession stands, locker rooms and team offices.

"I think a quarter-million or half-million [dollar] rehab would be a lot easier to swallow than a \$6-[million] to \$8-million [project] with no guarantee," Doyle added.

"It's simple economics. I love the Mets. I think the ownership is

great. It's a great time. There's two tickets right here," he said, pointing to the pair sitting on his desk. "I mean, where else can you go and see a ballgame for \$4.50?"

"On the other hand, a lot of people think Wahconah Park is a beautiful park. Let's face it, the people I've got to make happy are the fans."

Last week, Gladstone said the player development contract between National Pastime's New York-Penn League franchise and the New York Mets would not be renewed after the 2000 season, and that the condition of the park would likely be an issue when new suitors are courted next fall.

Still, both the club and the city tout the relationship the two have built.

"This year, that field was used more than ever by high schools and the [American Legion teams]. That's the relationship we developed with the Mets," Doyle noted.

"They have the right to say 'no' to that kind of thing."

Meanwhile, Ward 7 Councilor Joseph O. Guzzo, whose ward includes 80-year-old Wahconah Park, believes the old park should be refurbished, rather than a new park built.

"I think we already have a great location, and we should invest in what we have. There's a lot we can do with the existing facility to make it very attractive. I would support capital investments in the resources we already have," Guzzo said.

Meanwhile, the Mets' plans to have a team playing in Brooklyn next season are not yet solidified, according to published reports.

An article published last week in the New York Daily News said that teenagers organized by a city activist group are angry that the city will give the Parade Grounds, a park at the corner of Cator Avenue and Parade Place in Flatbush, to the Mets, while a Coney Island ballpark is being built. The Mets and the city have not finalized the deal that will put the team's single A short-season club in the new park.

At the same time, the New York Mets have yet to close a deal with the St. Catharines (Ont.) Stompers for purchase of that New York-Penn League franchise. Stompers majority owner Greg Sorbara has declined comment on speculation that his team will be purchased by the major league club and moved to Brooklyn.

The Pittsfield Gazette November 18, 1999

Advocates contemplate past and future of Springside Park ponds

The Springside Park ponds — in silt and marred by garbage. The upper body of water, called Steven's Pond, is in particularly poor condition.

"It's hard to tell it's even a pond anymore," Mellstrom said. "Really, what you have now is a swamp that's banded by stones."

Mellstrom said that the study will focus only on the watershed area and not the park in general. Most intense scrutiny will be given to the lower pond, which can be seen from Springside Avenue.

The consultants asked the assembled audience for information on past use of the two ponds as well as suggestions for potential future uses. The query at first elicited reminiscences of glory days, when the lower pond was a popular swimming hole and Steven's pond was stocked with fish each year.

Audience member Joe Lynch recalled that the lower pond once featured two aeration fountains. "That's where I learned to swim," Lynch said, smiling with the memory. "That's where I did the belly flop, off those two fountains."

Rented row boats once dotted the pond, one man recalled. Others remembered the throngs of people who enjoyed the pond area in the winter, for both skating and sledding. The lower pond, some recalled, featured both a swimming area and a "frog pond" set off by a small dam.

Due to polluted water, the city eventually banned swimming in the pond and the watershed over the years fell into disrepair.

Elementary school educator Judy MacPherson said that she organizes several field trips to the park each year, but worries about taking children on the overgrown trails connecting the two ponds.

"It's not a safe walk from Steven's Pond to the lower pond," MacPherson said. "I would like to see the trails made a little bit safer

and maybe a little but wider."

Although many in the audience waxed nostalgic about the swimming hole, it is clear that this use will remain in the past. Not only is the water polluted, it would take a major dredging effort to clear the silt and weed growth.

"I don't think we'll see [the ponds] return to a swimming area," agreed community services director Robert Mellace.

But the idea of restoring the lower pond for skating intrigued some. In fact, members of one Springside group considered flooding the area as a skating pond last year.

"I think that's a great idea," said Jim McGrath, a member of a group developing an arboretum at the park. "The neighborhood would love that."

But park commissioner Sue Colker worries about the somewhat secluded location. A skating pond, she suggested, could be a draw for vandals.

"You know what happened at Canoe Meadow," she said. "[Vandals] burned down the sugar house."

Harvey Sides of the Springside Greenhouse group said that cleanup should be a priority. "The park, right now, is badly used as a dump," he said.

The discussion lasted nearly one and one-half hours. Mellstrom suggested that the advocates seem to favor restoration of the area as a natural site with secondary recreational opportunities.

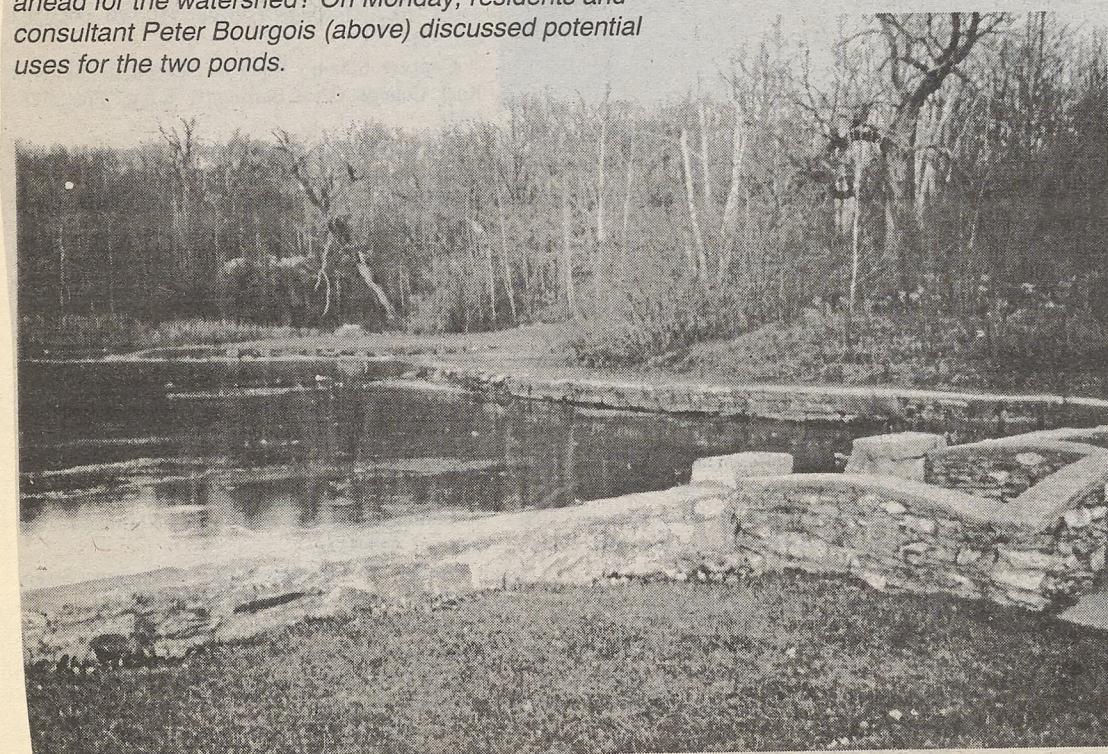
McGrath agreed, noting that the park has limitless potential as an education resource. "It's a jewel in this urban landscape," he said.

Mellace expects the study to be complete by the end of February. The park commission hopes to sponsor at least two more public hearings as the effort proceeds, he said.

The next public hearing will likely be held on December 13, the community services director added.



The Springside Ponds have a storied past, but what lies ahead for the watershed? On Monday, residents and consultant Peter Bourgois (above) discussed potential uses for the two ponds.



Mets leaving Pittsfield after 2000

By Greg Sukiennik
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Mets will play at Wahconah Park through the 2000 New York-Penn League season. But beyond that, the future of minor league baseball here may in large part depend on the city's ability to greatly improve or replace Wahconah Park, franchise President William L. Gladstone said yesterday.

The issue, Gladstone said, is that 80-year-old Wahconah Park, in its present condition, may be a difficult sell to major league teams interested in replacing the New York Mets — who plan to field a team in Brooklyn instead — as the source of baseball players for the Pittsfield franchise. That could also make it difficult for Gladstone's New York-Penn League franchise to remain in Pittsfield, he said.

"The whole facilities question is going to matter," Gladstone, the president of National Pastime Co., said yesterday. "It matters to the [New York-Penn] League. It matters now to the Mets, although they have adjusted to it. And it will matter to any new franchise we affiliate with."

Wahconah improvements

Meanwhile, Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr., who says he is committed to keeping minor league baseball in Pittsfield, is still looking at paving the parking lot and expanding the concessions stands at the park. He said he has ordered cost estimates for replacing the bench seating in the grandstands with more comfortable individual seats and for

8/31/99

Gladstone said Wahconah Park, in its present condition, may be a difficult sell to major league teams interested in replacing the New York Mets.

Replacing the park's 25-year-old lighting system, half of which went dark during the seventh inning of Wednesday night's game.

Doyle said a new stadium, on a different site or the current site, is a long-term prospect, rather than a short-term project, and one that will require state funding.

"I have talked to members of our [legislative] delegation about it several times," Doyle said. "Building on the current site would raise significant wetlands protection issues, he added.

In the meantime, Doyle has stressed the good relationship he has built with Gladstone, and the service the city has provided the club when it has had concerns or problems.

The Mets drew more than 84,000 fans last season and are likely to break the 80,000 attendance mark this year as well, Gladstone said.

National Pastime Co. has a

METS, continued on A4

A4 — The Berkshire Eagle, Friday, August 13, 1999

Mets from A1

player development contract with the New York Mets through the 2000 season. The contract supplies a minor league team with players, coaches and trainers from the parent club's farm system, and gives the major league team a place to train and scout its future stars.

But Gladstone does not expect that National Pastime and the New York Mets will enter into another player development contract, because the Mets are now committed to a Coney Island team.

On Jan. 4 of this year, after a year of speculation over if, or when, the Mets would move to Coney Island, Doyle announced the Mets would be staying through 2000.

At one point, it seemed inevitable that the franchise would move to Brooklyn. But both Gladstone and the New York Mets said philosophical differences in how the team would be run once it moved put an end to the deal.

There is now no chance that Gladstone will move his franchise to Brooklyn, "period," he said. "We've had our discussions with the Mets and we're not the team that moves to Brooklyn."

Other clubs

Since Gladstone has also stated that he expects the Mets and National Pastime to play out their contract through the 2000 season, that most likely means National Pastime will be entertaining other major league clubs for the right to have their players and coaches play short season Class A minor league baseball here, or elsewhere in 2001.

The wheeling and dealing will occur in September 2000, during a period in which baseball rules allow for such talks to take place.

When those major league clubs consider Pittsfield as a minor league home, Gladstone said, Wahconah Park's deficiencies, particularly in the area of visitors' locker rooms and fan amenities, could prove an issue.

"We certainly will have a team and another PDC [player development contract]," he said. "We'll have to see as the years go on what arrangements will be made here or what the alternatives are."

Facilities are one issue in St. Catharines, Ontario, where the Stompers, who also play in the New York-Penn League, may play a supporting role in the New York Mets' efforts to put a baseball team on Coney Island.

The Mets are reportedly in negotiations to buy a New York-Penn League team and move it to Brooklyn, and it has been speculated that the Stompers — who

have lost money and have problems with their 12-year-old park — are that team. Neither the New York Mets nor the St. Catharines club returned calls seeking comment yesterday.

Gladstone said he is aware that the city is dealing with financial limitations when it comes to big-ticket capital items like a new stadium, and that it has other priorities, such as schools. Indeed, the city should not build a stadium just because his baseball team would like one, but because it wants a community facility for high school athletics and concerts as well, he explained.

"To build a stadium for a team that plays 38 home games plus some playoffs is a major investment," Gladstone said. "You have to feel it's good for the community, good for other things [like concerts and high school sports] and that it brings enough revenue into the community to justify it."

Then again, he pointed out, the Mets are the city's biggest tourist draw.

"We never said that [a stadium] was sensible standing alone. But we do bring in attendance of over 80,000, and except Tanglewood, the Clark [Art Institute] and the Rockwell [Museum], there's not anybody in the county who's close. So we do bring business into the Pittsfield, and it has real value."

On the other hand, when asked about how his franchise would react to park improvements, Gladstone pointed to the commitment he made in November of 1996 to sign a long-term lease if such improvements came to pass. The team would contribute to such a project by paying rent, he said.

Had the team and the city's 1996 plan come to pass, the team would have opened its 1999 season in the new facility.

Wahconah Park has been the home of professional baseball, as well as high school football and the odd pro wrestling extravaganza, for the last 80 years. The Pittsfield Hills made their inaugural Eastern League pennant run there in 1919, when the park opened. The grandstand, built in 1950, was designed by city architect Joseph McArthur Vance, the designer of the Colonial Theatre.

Further improvements were made in the mid-1970s with federal funds, and two years ago a drainage system was installed, improving the sometimes swampy outfield and reducing the number of rainouts.

House Speaker Thomas Finneran's statements about state support of pro sports to the contrary, the state in fact has spent money in facilities whose primary tenants are minor league sports teams.

In Lowell, state money paid for the \$13 million Edward LeLacheur Park, the home of the Lowell Spinners. And state money was also set aside for Paul E. Tsongas Arena, which is used by the city's American Hockey League franchise as well as the hockey team for the University of Massachusetts-Lowell.

In Springfield, the state has committed \$25 million to renovations at the Springfield Civic Center, home of the Springfield Falcons of the American Hockey League.



Remember when?

8/22/99 Eagle file photo
Much talk these days about the overall conditions at Wahconah Park. Included on that list of things to improve is the lighting at the venerable stadium. Lights first came to Wahconah Park in 1949. In the above photo, workers prepare to put up the first set of lights. A second set of lights, the ones that are currently in use, were put in place in 1979. Interesting to note that the grandstand behind home plate had yet to be constructed in this 1949 picture.



All decked out

12/24/99 Eagle file photo
Park Square in Pittsfield looks its best last night in preparation for Christmas. First Congregational Church is at right.

Consultants gather input for study of park needs

11/17/99 By D.R. Bahliam
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Wider trails, easier access and restoration of the "flower pond" are among the elements that should be included in a plan for improvements at Springside Park, consultants to the city told Monday night.

Representatives of Dufresne-Henry Inc., a Greenfield-based firm of engineers, attended a meeting of the Park Commission at Springside House to gather comments and ideas from citizens to guide them in their preparation of a plan for the park.

The plan is to focus on two ponds at Springside: a small "upper pond," also known as Stevens Pond, the larger "lower pond," which is situated just off Springside Avenue, and the watershed that supplies the ponds.

The smaller pond is completely "silted in," said Robert E. Mellstrom, vice president of Dufresne-Henry, and reeds and silt are steadily encroaching on open water areas in the lower pond.

Mellstrom and Peter D. Bourgois, a landscape architect who is a principal in The Cavendish Partnership of Springfield, Vt., sought to obtain a general idea of what activities the ponds would support or enhance. The Cavendish Group is a division of Dufresne-Henry.

Suggestions at last night's meeting included environmental education, fishing (one man recalled that the upper pond used to be stocked with fish from Pontoosuc Lake), bicycling on an improved trail between the two ponds, and skating.

An "outdoor classroom," perhaps situated near the upper pond, would be welcome, as would improved parking and access to the park for all visitors, particularly those who are handicapped, the consultants were told.

Mellstrom and Bourgois said they expect to have a preliminary plan ready for public review during the commission's meeting on Dec. 13. A final plan is due in January.

The consultants are being paid with funds from a \$15,000 "matching" grant to which the city contributed \$7,500 and the state Department of Environmental Management \$7,500.

In other business last night, the commission formally accepted the licensing agreement between the city and the Pittsfield Mets for use of Wahconah Park for the 2000 regular baseball season and playoff season.

Police seek motive, suspects in shooting of 17-year-old

By Tony Dobrowolski
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Pittsfield Police are still looking for both a motive and suspects in the shooting of a 17-year-old man in Tucker Park on the city's West Side Friday night.

Darrell Dickerson of West Street was wounded when he was shot in the left buttock at about 10:50 p.m. Friday. Following the incident, Dickerson went to Berkshire Medical Center on his own to seek treatment.

He was admitted to BMC on Friday night and was in good condition yesterday in the hospital's pediatrics unit, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Victim won't cooperate

Capt. John T. O'Neill, the commander of the detective bureau, said suspects have yet to be found because Dickerson has refused to cooperate with police.

Tucker Park, which is situated on the corner of Linden Street and Robbins Avenue across from the Christian Center, has been the scene of narcotics activity. But O'Neill said police believe that drugs were not the motive for the shooting. Dickerson's lack of cooperation has ham-

pered police in establishing a motive, O'Neill said.

"We won't know until we get a witness or somebody says something," O'Neill said. "We have no idea what it was over."

O'Neill said police have also yet to recover the gun used in the shooting or any shell casings to determine the caliber of the bullet fired.

"Nothing was found in the park," O'Neill said.

O'Neill said several people called police Friday night to report they had heard shots fired in the park. At least one caller stated that two men were seen running north on Robbins Avenue after the shots had been fired.

Once the case was turned over to the detective bureau, O'Neill said police were

Shooting from B1

able to establish that one of the men reported running on Robbins Avenue was Dickerson. O'Neill has not identified the other man, O'Neill said.

Police responding to the scene also found a 1987 Dodge van with its back window shot out parked in front of 150 Linden St. According to the police blotter, the van was positively identified at 9:28 a.m. Saturday.

The blotter stated that on Friday at 11:10 p.m. officers, along with police dog "Jack," began a search of the area going north from the corner of Linden Street and Robbins Avenue.

At 11:21 p.m., the dog's tracking led officers to an open basement door at 144 Madison Ave. Officers searched the area around the Madison Avenue residence but at 11:25 p.m. reported they did not find the suspects.

Shortly after the shooting incident was reported to police, medical personnel from BMC's emer-

gency room also called police to report that a man had come to the hospital for treatment of a gunshot wound.

The shooting was the first reported in Pittsfield since August when two incidents occurred within a four-day span.

On Aug. 14, shots were fired following an argument between two men in the common hallway of a duplex apartment building on Calumet Street. No one was injured. On Aug. 18, Michael Gamble, 26, of Bronx, N.Y., was wounded when he was shot in the lower back in the kitchen of a Prospect Street residence while attending a birthday party.

On Sept. 2, police arrested Anthony T. "Tone" Hardaway, 18, of Bradford Street while he was walking in Tucker Park and charged him with the Calumet Street incident. Hardaway is being held in the Berkshire County House of Correction on \$10,000 bail.

Although no one has been charged with shooting Gamble, police believe Hardaway was at the Prospect Street residence when the incident occurred.

In September, Police Chief Anthony J. Riello assigned several officers to the city's West Side after 10 incidents involving weapons being fired had been reported in the city between April and August.

Yesterday, Christian Center director Cheryl T. Nolan said an officer assigned to the neighborhood had been at the Christian Center at 6:30 p.m. Friday, while another officer was seen walking a beat in the neighborhood later in the evening.

Nolan said West Side residents were feeling "a little uncomfortable" about Friday night's incident but would continue to work with police in stopping crime in that area.

"It doesn't shake my faith in the Police Department," Nolan said. "This is just one of those things that happen. They can't be everywhere, every time."



Let it snow

Pittsfield firefighters and public works employees train snow guns on the hill at Clapp Park, a popular spot for sledding, especially during school vacation weeks. Only 1.4 inches of snow has been recorded so far in Pittsfield.

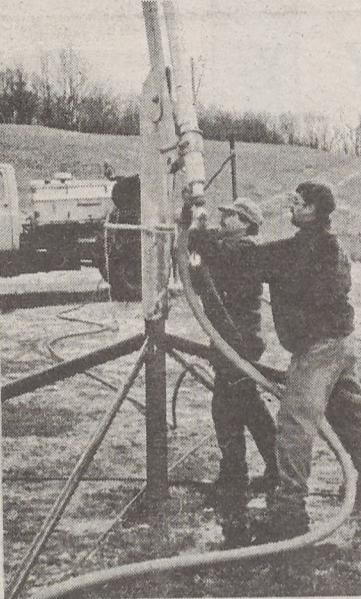
City employees pinch hit for Mother Nature at Clapp Park

The Berkshire First Night Schedule calls for sledding at Clapp Park. Since Mother Nature showed no indication of providing snow before New Year's Eve, a group of city employees decided to make their own. With two snow guns borrowed from Bousquet Ski Resort providing a mini-blizzard on Monday and Tuesday, part of the steep hillside at the West Housatonic Street Park was soon covered in a blanket of white. Dozens of youngsters headed to the park for sledding.

About 14 employees from the building & maintenance department and nearly 30 firefighters helped with the project.

"It was a learning experience for all of us and we pulled it off," said Ed Kuni, a building & maintenance worker. "I feel good that it worked. The snow is there."

Kuni, who coordinated the project, said that the base of the hill now has nearly 32 inches of snow while the slope has at least 10 inches. He praised Bousquet owner George Jervas for



Youngsters eagerly embraced the man-made white stuff.

quick education on snow making. "It was pretty interesting."

Kuni said that Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr. discussed the possibility of making snow and the city employees embraced the project. Some workers spent long hours at the Park on Monday night and into Tuesday morning to oversee the snowstorm.

"Not a dime [of city money] was spent," Kuni said. "It was all volunteers. Everyone thought that this would be a good thing for the kids, for First Night."

Snow making requires high pressure waterpumps, at least 100 pounds of pressure, which is where the fire department came in. An engine pump was hooked to the water source and the operation was soon in business.

Firefighter Stephen Duffy said that the volunteers enjoyed the project. "I'd never done it before, no one had," he said. "It was kind of fun. It worked out well."

Duffy believes that the snow making demonstrates Pittsfield's community spirit.

"I think you'd find that if most times when something needs to be done in this town, people will step forward and do it," he said.

Kuni said that there are currently no plans to make more snow at Clapp Park. He noted, however, that things could change if the snow begins to wear thin because of the large numbers of kids already sledding on the hill.

"At this point, I think we got plenty of snow," he said. "It's the only place in the city where the kids can go sledding."

On Wednesday the icy hill was contrasted by a grassy field.



12/30/94
Climbing the "snow-covered" portion of the Clapp Park hill tested kids' mettle as ice quickly formed. In the background, a "snow-less" baseball diamond and field are visible.

After 16 years, Bernie Goclowski steps aside at Wild Acres

A hearty salute to Bernard J. Goclowski on his retirement as president of Friends of Wild Acres after 16 years of outstanding service. Fortunately, he has agreed to be vice president and will assist Fred B. Garner Jr., who was elected president by the directors at their meeting Feb. 8 at Springside House.

Goclowski spearheaded the movement to save the popular fishing derbies at the Pittsfield recreational area off South Mountain Road when they were about to be eliminated back in May 1983 because of Proposition 2 1/2 restraints on the municipal budget. In a letter to the editor of The Eagle, Goclowski, then a GE ordnance plant marketing engineer, cried "help" and appealed for monetary donations.

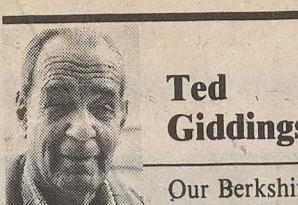
His cries were heard by Dick Petruzzella, Frank Patrick (now of Washington, D.C.) and others who, with Goclowski, formed the Friends of Wild Acres as a nonprofit membership organization. They had membership tickets printed and appealed to civic and fraternal organizations for support.

Among those who responded, Goclowski recalled, was the Pittsfield Aerie of Eagles. The organization was disbanding because of declining membership and voted to give \$1,000 to the Friends.

Also, the late Franklin H. Controy,

Friends," Fred P. Garner Jr. recalled, "and I've been on the board about six years. I grew up going to Wild Acres and the derbies, and am still doing it." Garner, 35, who married the former Heather French of Pittsfield and has a son and daughter, is North Adams branch manager of S & A Supply Inc. His stepmother, Mrs. Fred P. Garner, is the former Gail Hebert, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent J. Hebert.

Re-elected at the meeting were Dick Petruzzella, secretary; Don Massery, treasurer; Nick Ruggeri, assistant treasurer, and all board members.



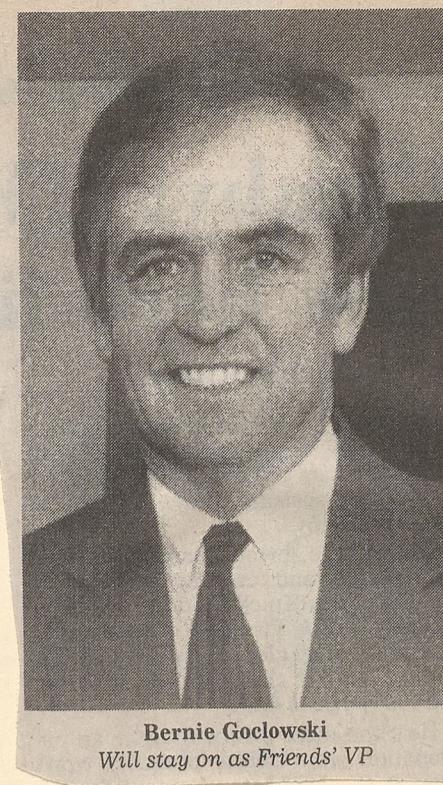
Ted Giddings
Our Berkshires

city Conservation Commission chairman who single-handedly had raised funds to keep the derbies going the previous year, Vincent J. Hebert, city parks and recreation superintendent; and Edward Bailey, City Pond Fish Committee, all pledged support in conducting the Wild Acres events, a job they had been doing effectively for many years.

With the cost of hatchery trout continuing to mount (last year's bill was \$7,000), FOWA officers and directors are appealing to old friends and new, including organizations as well as individuals, to make donations payable to Friends of Wild Acres, P.O. Box 1542, Pittsfield, 01201.

If new president Garner's name sounds familiar, it's because his late father, a GE ordnance employee, spent weekends as head of Pittsfield's park police. The Fred B. Garner Park on the Housatonic River off Pomeroy Avenue was named in his memory.

"My dad was a director of the



Bernie Goclowski
Will stay on as Friends' VP

Wild Acres is a forgotten jewel

To the Editor of THE EAGLE—
Remember the days in spring when parents said grab your fishing poles and dig some worms? It meant one thing, fishing derby at Wild Acres, funded and run by the city at one time.

These days were and are fading. But a group of people in 1983 saved the tradition which was cut by proposition 2 1/2. This group called Friends of Wild Acres is still here, but in need of people's support and donations.

This jewel is in need of some work and with the airport expansion (which already has cost us the athletic fields) going ahead, this organization needs people's support to keep this time-honored tradition going for generations to come. Friends of Wild Acres is made up of ordinary citizens who care about keeping this Berkshires' secret preserved and put to good use for the people of the Berkshires.

Let's keep this forgotten jewel and the fishing derbies for the children, persons with disabilities, and seniors going into the next century.

FRED GARNER JR.

Pittsfield, March 8, 1999

The author is president of Friends of Wild Acres

3/16/1999

Harnessing Wild Acres

Fred Garner, Jr. promotes a natural resource in Pittsfield

By Anthony Fyden

Fred P. Garner, Sr. moved to Pittsfield from a more urban city in Pennsylvania and immediately fell in love with the region's bucolic setting, especially the expansive Wild Acres conservation area.

The General Electric employee soon became one of the city's strongest park advocates, even working weekends as a park supervisor. Garner and his family spent countless hours at Wild Acres for family reunions, pick-up baseball games and fishing.

The Pittsfield Gazette M.V.P. Most Valuable Pittsfielders

When Proposition 2 1/2 devastated the parks department budget in the early 1980s, Garner and other advocates stepped forward to form the Friends of Wild Acres, to ensure that the site would not be lost to future generations.

A city park, nestled off Pomeroy Road near the Housatonic River, now bears the late Garner's name in recognition of his contribution.

It was almost inevitable that Garner's love of the outdoors and of Wild Acres would be instilled in his son, Fred Garner, Jr. It's a legacy that the younger Garner embraces.

"My father saw all that's available here, all this nature," Garner says. "He never had that when he was a kid. I grew up with it, and I don't

want to see it get lost." Garner is now the president of the Friends of Wild Acres. He replaced Bernie Goclowski — who was instrumental in forming the organization — about one year ago. Goclowski stayed on as vice president.

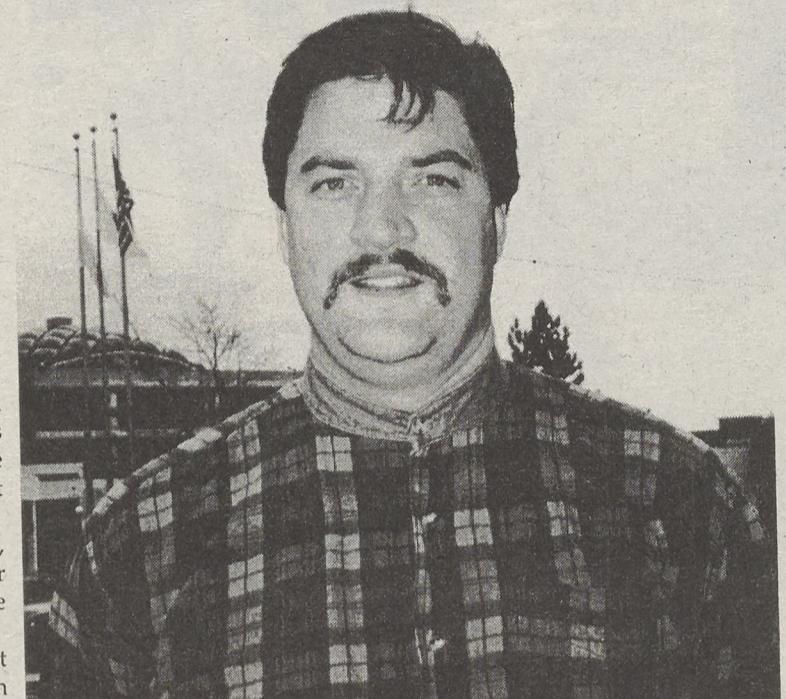
The new president's goal is simple: introduce as many people as possible to Wild Acres and then enlist their help in restoring the site. The Wild Acres area, which lies in Southwest Pittsfield near the municipal airport, has a lot to offer, Garner notes. There are miles of hiking trails, a picnic pavilion and expansive fields for sports. Wildlife abounds in the area and a small lake provides great fishing.

"If people realize what's out there, it's going to speak for itself," Garner said. "People are going to fall in love with it like I did."

It is the fishing possibilities that Garner believes could help enlighten more residents to Wild Acres. For decades, Wild Acres has hosted an annual fishing derby, bringing hundreds of families to the site. Garner wants to build on that success.

This year's fishing derby will take place over several days during May, beginning on May 1 with the kids' derby. "It's just a great family event," Garner said. "Some of the kids we get there, this will be their first time fishing."

Garner recalls one young mother who brought her two sons to a derby, carrying brand new fishing poles purchased at the Ames discount store. Although the mother knew



Fred Garner, Jr. wants more people to enjoy the natural beauty of the Wild Acres Conservation area. The upcoming annual fishing derby is a great way to introduce families to the site.

nothing about fishing, volunteers stepped over to help, and the youngsters were soon reeling in the trout.

"We got those two kids fishing," Garner said. "We've got a lot of old-time fishermen in our group who really know what they're doing. They go around and help out wherever they're needed."

In addition to the kids' derby, there are separate derbies for seniors and for people with disabilities — sponsored in conjunction with the Pittsfield Civilian Club.

Although the event draws hundreds of people, Garner recalls the days when the shore would literally teem with fishermen. "There were kids standing elbow to elbow," he said. "It was incredible, everyone's lines were getting tangled up."

Managing the fishing derby costs the Friends of Wild Acres nearly \$7,000 each year. That's just about what the group takes in through donations. Garner hopes to expand interest in the site, membership in the group and, eventually, the organization's budget.

business people, Garner is confident that a compromise can be worked out. One possible solution, he said, would be to simply trade some land, which would ensure that Wild Acres does not lose ground while giving the airport the land it needs.

Garner stressed, however, that nothing will be done to compromise the Wild Acres setting. "I think everything will balance out," he said.

Garner is more than enthusiastic about his new role as the organization's president. The Pittsfield native, who works as North Adams branch manager for S & A Supply, Inc., has always been active in the community, lending his efforts in the past to the Boys' & Girls' Club, Junior Football and other projects.

Fred Garner, Jr. and his wife, Heather, have two children, Shea, 8, and Lauryn, 5.

Garner's step-grandfather was the late Vin Hebert, a strong advocate for city parks. "He's the one that got me into fishing to begin with," Garner recalls. Over the next several years, Garner believes that the current "grassroots" Friends group can expand its reach, involving more people and enlisting more businesses for financial support. "It's going to take some time, but I think we can do it," he says. "This is something that's in my blood."

The first leg of this year's fishing derby will be held on May 1 & 2 with a meet for kids 6-14 years old. The seniors event takes place on May 4-7 and May 24-28. The derby for people with disabilities will be held on May 23.

For more information or to donate to the Friends of Wild Acres, write to P.O. Box 1542, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

Youngsters haul in 292 trout at Wild Acres fishing derby

Nearly 500 boys and girls, ages 6-14, took advantage of ideal weather to cast for trout last weekend in the annual fishing derby at Wild Acres pond off South Mountain Road, Pittsfield.

"They did darn well, catching 292 of the trout we stocked for them," reported Fred B. Garner Jr., new president of the Friends of Wild Acres, sponsor of the event with the Pittsfield Park and Recreation Department.

The kids used all kinds of enticements for the hatchery orphans, ranging from lowly earthworms and nightcrawlers to a wide variety of artificial lures. Prizes of fishing tackle were awarded to the lucky youngsters who caught tagged trout.

They were: Adam Wiedeman, age 9; Dan Barzottini, 6; Brian Harris, 11; Jason Smith, 13; Reed McClusky, 9; Jared Gale, 9; Stephanie Zuber, 10; Alex Walak, 6; Haley Pierce, 7; Jessica Grise, 7; Amy Kasala, 13 and Kayla Gaetani, 9.

Old-timers got their chance to fish last Tuesday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., and will again May 24-28 at the same hours. Persons with disabilities will have their fishing day May 23, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Two buses have been chartered to transport Berkshire area supporters of Gun Owners Action League to Boston Monday, May 17, for its statewide "Rally For Our Rights" on Boston Common, starting at 11 a.m. The rides are free, thanks to GOAL and business and sportsmen's groups.

Peter McBride of Pittsfield, a GOAL director, said each bus has a 47-passenger capacity, and there's a possibility of a third bus, if interest warrants. The buses will leave North Adams Plaza at 7 a.m., Berkshire Mall at 7:20, and McClelland



Ted Giddings
Our Berkshires

Drug Store, Lee, 7:45. The buses are expected to return by 6 p.m.

Rally speakers will include Jim Baker of the NRA; Jim Fotis, Law Enforcement Alliance of America; Massad Ayoob, Lethal Force Institute; Karen McNutt, a lawyer recognized as an expert on the Mass. gun law and others.

"There will be demonstrations from re-enactment groups and visits to the offices of Berkshire County legislators," McBride said. "Join us in this rally for freedom."

Information and bus reservations: Peter McBride, GOAL, GEAA, P.O. Box 499-2424; Gary Wilk (GOAL, Lee Sportsmen's Association), 443-6188; and Charlie Chapin (Pittsfield Sportsmen's Club), 743-7263.

Hunters in the western district of the state killed 519 tom turkeys during the first week of the spring season, 190 more than last year, according to Tony Gola, district wildlife supervisor. However, unlike last year, they were allowed to take two birds provided they were bearded and killed on separate days.

Top checking station was the Inn at Charlemont, 124, while Margaret Beckwith's Sportsmen's Stop, Lake Buel Road, Great Barrington, led the Berkshire stations with 92 followed by western district headquarters, Pittsfield, 87; Fountain Pond, Great Barrington, 75; Dave's

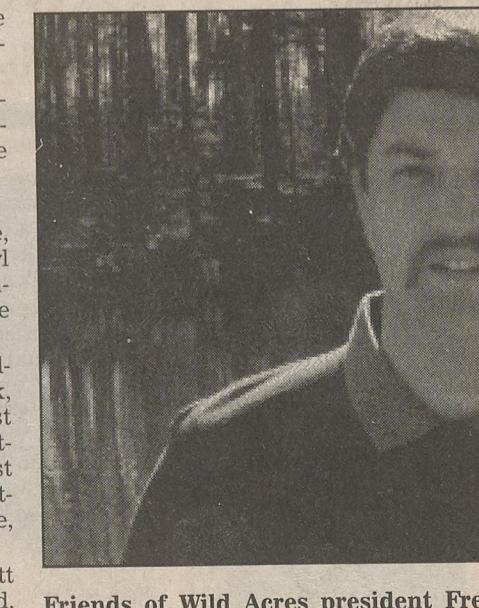
Sporting Goods, Pittsfield, 68; Berkshire Ace Hardware, Otis, 37; and Savoy General Store, 30.

The kill fell off drastically at the beginning of the past week, with only 12 gobblers being checked at Hubbard Avenue station the first three days.

Tiger trout were stocked in Onota Lake, Laurel Lake, Lee, and Stockbridge Bowl the past week by the western district fisheries crew. They also released trout in the following waters:

Konkapot River, Montereys, New Marlboro and Sheffield; Umpachene Brook, New Marlboro; Westfield River East Branch, Chesterfield, Huntington; Westfield River, Middle Branch, and West Branch, Knightville Impoundment, Huntington; Littleville Lake, Norwick Lake, Huntington; Westfield River, Russell.

Also, Ashfield Lake, Ashfield; Sackett Brook, Dalton, Pittsfield; Windsor Pond, Windsor.



Friends of Wild Acres president Fred Garner Jr. presided over the area's recent children's fishing derby, which attracted some 500 youngsters.



Berkshire County champions

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth age 13 all-star team recently won this year's Berkshire County title and will advance to the state West district tournament which begins on Friday at Bullens Field in Westfield. Pittsfield opens on Saturday at 4. Members of the squad include, from left, FRONT ROW: Shane Perrault, Brandon Bushey, Shane Broderick, Dan Larrow, Matt Tirrell, John Moore and Matt Coty. BACK ROW: Coach Mark Bushey, coach Derek Garofano, Justin Coniglio, Jon Martin, Dan Walters, Corey Phillips, Joe Wasuk, Michael Boino, Matt Ward, Mike Massery, manager Mike Phillips and coach Dick Ward.

7/14/99



City champions

K&J Variety defeated Flynn's Pharmacy, 13-12, to capture this year's Pittsfield Parks and Recreation girls' age 12 and under city softball title. Sara Flynn and Maggie Barry each had three hits for the winners. It was the third straight city crown for K&J. Team members include, from left, FIRST ROW: Alyssa Scholz, Katrina Litano, Hillary Smith, Desiree Giardina, Katie Sutton, Brittny Lussier and Amy Giardina. SECOND ROW: Head coach Tom Lussier, Shayna Arasimowicz, Alyssa Furlano, Katrina Maffuccio, Stephanie Nalios, Sara Stoklosa, Melissa Lussier and Daralyn Klemansky. BACK ROW: Melissa Houle, coach Tom Arasimowicz and Peter Giardina.

8/14/99

Pittsfield Babe Ruth meeting Tuesday

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth Baseball League has scheduled a meeting Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St. The 1999 season, schedule, possible coaching vacancies and league planning will be discussed.

Information: Parks Department, 499-9343; Dan DeSantis, 499-0841, or any Babe Ruth board member.

2/20/99

Pittsfield Babe Ruth seeks volunteers

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth baseball league is in the process of planning its 1999 season, and is seeking volunteers to help in various activities. Interested volunteers should contact the Recreation Department, 499-9343.

The league also needs umpires and an umpire-in-chief. Information: Mike Toner, 443-0951.

3/12/99

Pittsfield Babe Ruth sign-ups set 4/5/99

Sign-ups for the Pittsfield Babe Ruth League baseball program will be Saturday, April 10, at Springside House, 874 North St., from 9 to noon. Tryouts will begin April 24 and continue the following week at the Common on First Street.

Tryouts for 13-year-olds, Group A, will be April 24 from 9 to noon and April 26 at 6 p.m.; for 13-year-olds, Group B, on April 24 from 12:30 to 3:30 and April 27 at 6 p.m.; for 14- and 15-year-olds on April 25 at 12:30 and April 29 at 6. April 28 and 30 will be used for rain dates.

Pittsfield Babe Ruth registration under way

Registration is now under way for youngsters who want to play Babe Ruth baseball in Pittsfield. Registration will be taken at the Pittsfield Parks Department headquarters, 874 North Street, until tryouts begin on April 24. Tryouts will take place at the Pittsfield Common.

Tryouts for the 13 and the 14-15 year old divisions will begin the weekend of April 24-25. Registration will also be accepted at the tryouts.

4/20/99

Pittsfield Babe Ruth needs scorekeepers

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth baseball league is seeking scorekeepers for its age 14-15 league. There are six or seven games per week at Deming and Reid fields, and scorekeepers are paid \$11 per game.

Information: Ed Merriam, 499-5143.

4/6/99

Respect begins at home 4/14/99

Talk Back is a column of reader observations. To reach the Talk Back line and make your comments, call 496-6202.

We parents of Babe Ruth League players are appalled at the lack of support for our children. Berkshire County residents were notified through The Berkshire Eagle that these kids would be coming around in their uniforms to sell tickets to raise money for the league. We personally went to four streets in Pittsfield, and most people would not even answer the door, even when we knew they were home. Many who did come to the door were incredibly rude. What message is society sending to these good children who are trying to better their lives? We always hear about people wondering what is happening to our youth today. Well here is one example of what is happening. The sad thing is that this message is coming straight from the adults: Don't bother us. Shame on you, Pittsfield.

Pittsfield Babe Ruth tickets to be sold

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth League will hold its annual ticket drive on Sunday. Players will be canvassing neighborhoods between 11 and 1 and will be selling tickets for \$1 each. Proceeds will help defray the cost of league operation.

5/18/99

Jimmy Fund collection at Ruth openers

The Pittsfield Babe Ruth League will open its season on Sunday. A collection will be taken at each game for the benefit of the Jimmy Fund.

There will be a tripleheader in the 13-year-old division at Benedict Field, starting at noon. The 14-15 division will open with a doubleheader at Deming Field, starting at 1 p.m.

Babe Ruth age 16-18 team forming

PITTSFIELD - An attempt to form a Babe Ruth League age 16-18 team (or teams) is currently under way. The squad is for Pittsfield players who are not involved in Legion baseball. Anyone who would like to join the team is asked to call 442-7540 or 442-6304.

6/16/99

Pittsfield 13's stay alive with win in Ruth tournament

WESTFIELD — After losing their opener in the Western District, Babe Ruth age 13 tournament, Pittsfield knew their road to the final would be a long one.

Pittsfield didn't wilt, however, in the heat. The Berkshire County all-star contingents put four runs on the board in the third to trim the lead to 6-5. RBI singles by Mike Boino, Dan Larrow and Matt Tirrell and a fielder's choice RBI from Joe Wasuk accounted for the runs.

Larrow, though, came back with four runs in the fourth to complete the scoring. Pittsfield did put two runners on in the final inning, but never seriously threatened in the second half of the contest.

Larrow relieved Phillips in the fifth and had a strong sixth inning when he struck out the side. Larrow reached base in all four at-bats with two singles and two walks.

7/18/99

WESTFIELD — After losing

their opener in the Western District, Babe Ruth age 13 tournament, Berkshire County champion Pittsfield knew their road to the final would be a long one.

Last night, it got a little bit shorter. And Pittsfield winning pitcher Matt Ward had a great deal to do with keeping the city team alive in the double-elimination tournament.

Ward scattered seven hits and struck out five and had three hits and five RBIs to lead Pittsfield to an 11-1 win over Franklin County at Bullens Field.

There won't be time to rest.

Pittsfield will be back in action this afternoon at 5 when they play West Side of Worcester.

Mike Boino added two hits, including a two-run double in the third inning.

Pittsfield scored two runs in the second, three in the third, two in the fifth and four more in the sixth before the game was called

because of the 10-run mercy rule.

Times, dates are announced for Babe Ruth tournaments

The District 1 Berkshire County age 13 Babe Ruth baseball tournament is set to begin Monday night with two games at Joe Wolfe Field in North Adams.

In the first game, North Adams will play South Central at 5:30 p.m. with Dalton versus Pittsfield to follow at 8.

On Tuesday, Adams will meet the winner of the North Adams-South Central game at 5:30 p.m. and South Berkshire will face the winner of the Dalton-Pittsfield game at 8.

Action in the double-elimination event will continue through July 10th, with the championship game set for 1 p.m. Should a second game be necessary, it will be played immediately after the first game. The winner of the Berkshire County tournament will advance to the state tournament later this month at Bullens Field.

The Berkshire County age 14-15 year old tournament will begin on Sunday, July 11th and also be played at Joe Wolfe Field. In the first game at 2 p.m., Dalton will play South Berkshire. At 5 p.m. Adams and North Adams will meet. On July 12th, South Central will play the winner of the Dalton-South Berkshire game at 5:30 p.m. and Pittsfield will play the winner of the Adams-North Adams game at 8.

The championship is set for July 16th at 5:30 with an if game to follow at 8 if necessary.

An age 14 tournament is also being played. North Adams and Pittsfield are the only two teams in the field and will play a best-of-three series beginning July 12-14 at Ugo Balsanini Field in Adams. Game time is 5:30 each night.

7/11/99

The Pittsfield Gazette June 1st 1999

Babe Ruth booster

Jim Hassett's commitment to youth sports keeps the ball in play

By Anthony Fyden

The pop of a hard-throw pitch hitting a catcher's mitt; the crack of a bat sending a ball into the stratosphere; the chatter of young teammates urging each other on.

The sights and sounds of Babe Ruth baseball are plentiful—and music to the ears of those who love the game.

Jim Hassett is one of those people. He's been involved with Babe Ruth for nearly three decades. And even though Hassett's three boys have long since left the league, Hassett continues to play a key role, helping to maintain fields, assisting with league administrative duties and serving as score keeper.

The Pittsfield Gazette M.V.P.

Most Valuable Pittsfielders

"It gives you a great feeling just to be a part of it," Hassett says. "I'm associated with a great group of people and they deserve a lot of credit."

Hassett estimates that at least 4,000 local youngsters have been through the Babe Ruth ranks. Many of today's players have second or third generation relationships with the league.

The Babe Ruth league, overseen by the city's parks department, sponsors teams in two divisions, one for 13-year-olds and another for 14- & 15-year-olds. Hassett in recent years has focused his efforts on the 13-year-old division.

The impact of Babe Ruth baseball—a tradition in Pittsfield for more than 50 years—goes well beyond honing baseball skills.

"Today, our players come from all walks of life," Hassett said. "It gives them an opportunity to build on the teamwork aspect; it gives them the basics of discipline."

Hassett credits the multitude of coaches who spend summer afternoons working with the youngsters. He believes it is a great way to make a difference.

"We have coaches with a lot of skills and others with just a 'I would like to help' background—and they

are all welcome," Hassett said. "We're ever thankful for the people who take the time to coach."

Hassett first became involved with Babe Ruth baseball the way most people do: his kids wanted to play ball. He began coaching and eventually "thought my talents would be better used at the administrative level."

The Pittsfield native, now retired from General Electric Plastics, has served in a variety of capacities, including local league president and regional representative.

Hassett served as president for nearly 10 years, following the tenure of the late Lou Russo.

Parks department supervisor John Marchesi calls Hassett "the backbone" of the Babe Ruth League.

"I can't say enough about the guy," Marchesi said. "He's an exceptional person."

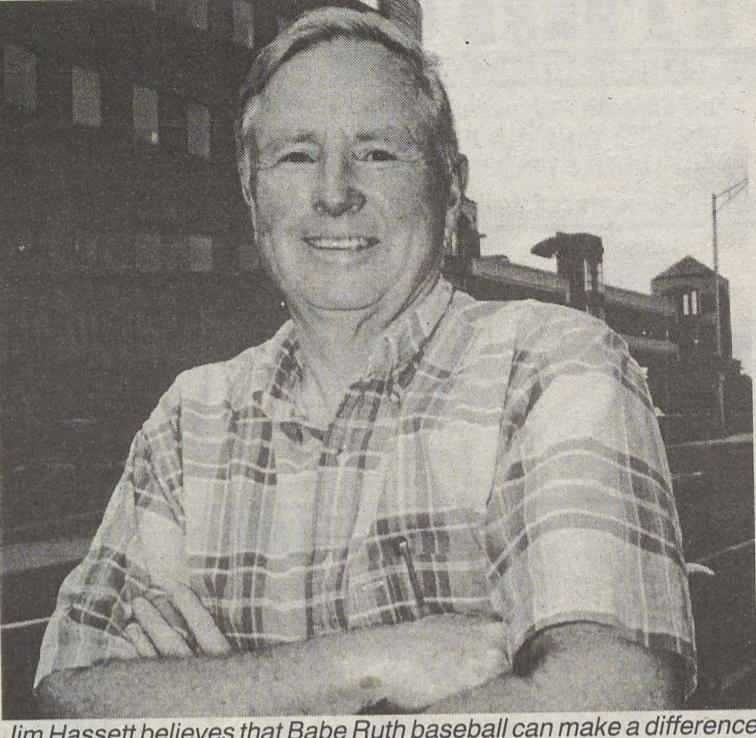
Marchesi said that Hassett plays a key role in keeping the league running smoothly, including organizing the major annual fundraiser with Gillette Shows. The parks supervisor added that Hassett helps on other youth projects as well, such as the Junior Football League and playing Santa Claus for the city's annual "North Pole Calling" effort.

"He's just a good volunteer guy," Marchesi said.

After his children finished playing city baseball, Hassett continued his involvement, both because he enjoyed it and because it was a way for him to contribute to the community.

In recent years, Hassett has taken on the role of unofficial groundskeeper, offering assistance to the parks department maintenance staff.

He mows grass, sweeps the dugout



Jim Hassett believes that Babe Ruth baseball can make a difference in the life of a child; that's why he spends summer afternoons on the diamonds.

and performs general trimming. His groundskeeping tasks began several years ago when parks staff was itself trimmed following the enactment of Proposition 21/2. Hassett felt that maintaining quality fields was important.

If we're going to have teams in here [for tournaments], the parks have to be kept up," Hassett said. "In a sense, I was just assisting the parks department by getting to stuff they didn't have time to do."

Hassett praised the parks department for its efforts, noting improvements to Clapp Park and other sites. The small staff, he said, faces a huge

challenge in maintaining the many city parks.

"They have a lot of places to try to keep trimmed and try to clean up," he said. "It's a heck of a job for these guys to keep under control."

Now the league's vice-president

Hassett believes the role of organized sports in a child's life can be more vital than ever. With many children coming from broken homes, the structure of sports is increasingly important.

"It's always been a sad thing, at any level, to have a kid out there on the field and have nobody in the grandstands there for them," Hassett

7/23/99

IUE 255 takes city Babe Ruth age 13 crown

PITTSFIELD — Winning pitcher Matt Tirrell outdueled Dan Larrow to give IUE 255 a 7-6 victory over Italian-American Club and this year's city Babe Ruth age 13 baseball title.

Dan Nolan had two hits, one RBI and three runs scored for the winners while Matt Mendocia had two hits including a double and one RBI.

Tirrell struck out 10, walked two and allowed six hits.

Joe Wasuk had two hits and two RBIs for Italian-American Club while Shane Perrault also added two hits.

The victory last night by IUE 255 marked the second straight game the club earned a come-from-behind win.

7/23/99

Pittsfield 13's lose opener in Westfield

WESTFIELD — Lemonister put Pittsfield in an early hole that proved to much for the locals to dig out from in yesterday's opening-round game of the Western District Babe Ruth age 13 tournament being played at Bullens Field.

The Berkshire County champions trailed 5-1 after one inning and went on to drop the contest 10-5. The double-elimination tournament continues tonight at 7 when Pittsfield will meet Franklin County.

Pittsfield, which was the visiting team, took an early 1-0 lead in the first frame. Shane Broderick doubled and eventually scored on an error. But Lemonister came right back with five runs in the home first against Pittsfield starter Corey Phillips.

A pair of RBI singles and a big three-run home run to deep right-center from Alex Nato gave Lemonister an early advantage. The home team then tacked on a single run in the second to make the score 6-1.

Pittsfield didn't wilt, however, in the heat. The Berkshire County all-star contingents put four runs on the board in the third to trim the lead to 6-5. RBI singles by Mike Boino, Dan Larrow and Matt Tirrell and a fielder's choice RBI from Joe Wasuk accounted for the runs.

Larrow relieved Phillips in the fifth and had a strong sixth inning when he struck out the side. Larrow reached base in all four at-bats with two singles and two walks.

7/23/99

WESTFIELD — After losing their opener in the Western District, Babe Ruth age 13 tournament, Berkshire County champion Pittsfield knew their road to the final would be a long one.

Last night, it got a little bit shorter. And Pittsfield winning pitcher Matt Ward had a great deal to do with keeping the city team alive in the double-elimination tournament.

Ward scattered seven hits and struck out five and had three hits and five RBIs to lead Pittsfield to an 11-1 win over Franklin County at Bullens Field.

There won't be time to rest.

Pittsfield will be back in action this afternoon at 5 when they play West Side of Worcester.

Mike Boino added two hits, including a two-run double in the third inning.

Pittsfield scored two runs in the second, three in the third, two in the fifth and four more in the sixth before the game was called

because of the 10-run mercy rule.

7/23/99

IUE 255 takes Babe Ruth lead

PITTSFIELD — IUE 255 has taken a leg up on winning the Pittsfield Babe Ruth age 13 championship.

IUE beat the Italian American Club 9-8 yesterday at Benedict Field. Game two of the series will be tonight at 5:30.

Cory Phillips got the win for IUE 255, while Matt Ward took the loss for the Italian

Pittsfield softball meeting Saturday

The Pittsfield Girls' Softball League has scheduled an organizational meeting Saturday at 10 a.m. at Springside House, 874 North St. Registration and tryout dates will be set, committees formed and officers elected. There are coaching vacancies in both the major and minor leagues, so interested coaches are asked to attend. Plans for improvements to the new girls' softball complex on Benedict Road will also be discussed. Information: Craig Rand, 445-5052.

3/19/97

Pittsfield sets girls' softball sign-up

Sign-ups for the Pittsfield Girls' Softball League will take place Saturday, April 24, from 9 to noon and Monday, April 26, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St.

All girls who will be 9 years old by Aug. 1 and who did not turn 17 before Jan. 1 are eligible. Returning and new players must sign up.

Registration for traveling teams also will be conducted. Traveling teams will play in both fast-pitch and slow-pitch competitions, with the under-16 team playing just fast pitch.

New players need to bring proof of age, and be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Information: Craig Rand at 445-5052 or Tom Lussier at 443-7539.

4/20/99

Pittsfield Parks age 14 girls are state champions

PITTSFIELD — The Pittsfield Parks and Recreation age 14 and under girls' softball team captured the state title in its division on Saturday in a tournament held in Leominster.

In what turned out to be three impressive victories, the Pittsfield squad outscored its opponents by a margin of 35-3. The four best teams in the state in this division competed in the double-elimination tournament.

Pittsfield now advances to the regional tournament scheduled for Rhode Island on Saturday, July 17.

In the opener, Pittsfield defeated Sturbridge, 12-2. Kristen Cebula was the winning pitcher and was backed offensively by Jena Giardina, who homered and had two singles. Lindsey Brodeur had three singles and three RBI's while Caitlin Quinn added two singles, a double and four RBI's.

Jenna Kruger singled, tripled and had three RBI's while Lindsay Pemble turned in the defensive gem of the game with a shoestring catch in the outfield.

Pittsfield drubbed host Leominster 12-1 in the second contest. Cebula and Jamey Coty combined on the mound to closet the Leominster offense.

Giardina had four hits for Pittsfield and made a solid defensive play in the game from her position at second base. Brodeur had two singles and a double and Quinn a double and single. Jackie LaRochelle also had a single and double.

Pittsfield was impressive again in the finals, blanking Leominster 11-0. Cebula had five strikeouts in the game and added three singles and three RBI's. Giardina added three hits while Brodeur launched a 265-foot home run and added three RBI's. Breezie Cote also homered and had three RBI's.

Pemble and LaRochelle each made strong defensive plays in the game.

The Pittsfield team is coached by John Giardina, Art Brodeur and George Houghtaling.

12/12/99

Pittsfield teams go 2-3 in age 12 softball tourney

PITTSFIELD — The second annual Pittsfield Parks and Recreation age 12 and under softball tournament being held this weekend at the Benedict Road softball complex saw the two Pittsfield teams entered finish in the middle of the pack following the first day of play.

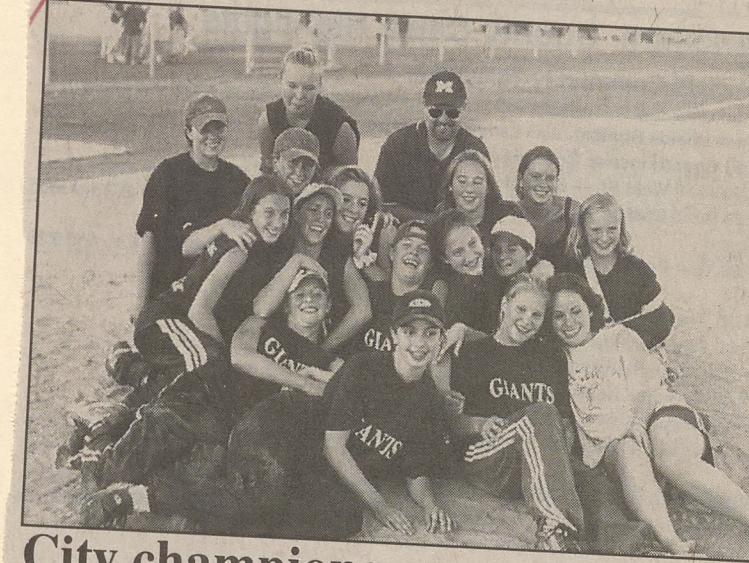
Greenfield is 3-0 while Amherst and Southampton finished yesterday 2-0. Pittsfield L went 1-2. Easthampton and Montague were 0-3.

Pittsfield L won its game against Montague, 11-5. Brittany Lucier was the winning pitcher while Amanda Flynn had a home run and three RBI's. Colleen Snyder added three hits for Pittsfield while Hillary Smith shone defensively at second base.

Pittsfield C won its game by a 6-3 score over Easthampton. Lisa Valenti was the winning pitcher with offense being provided by Daralyn Klemensky and Alyssa Furlano, who each hit home runs. Shannon Perrault and Amanda Coty were the defensive stars.

7/25/99

The Berkshire Eagle, Monday, August 23, 1999 — C



City champions

The Quality Printing Co. Giants recently won the Pittsfield Parks and Recreation girls' major division softball championship for the second straight year. Members of the team included the following: Coach Mark Mitchell, assistant coach Jen Bernardo, assistant coach Becky Hashim, Lori Baumann, Erica Barschdorf, Christina Burke, Nicole Orton, Sarah-Jo Stimpson, Catherine Burt, Jenna Kruger, Jackie Orton, Shauna Matthews, Kelly Kushi, Shannon Conrow, Amanda Flynn, Catherine Goodrich and Kate Bradley. Story with Area Sports.

Area Sports

Quality Printing wins city softball title

PITTSFIELD — The Quality Printing Giants defeated Pepe's Wings and Dogs in a best-of-three series to win the city Parks and Recreation Department girls' major division softball championship for the second straight year. Quality earned the title with a sweep that included scores of 12-3 and 20-7. Lori Bauman was the winning pitcher in both games. Kristen Kolis was the starter for Pepe's in both games.

In the opener, Bauman, Erica Barschdorf and Christina Burke each had two hits. Bauman had a home run and four RBI's while Barschdorf had three RBI's. Angela Rocca, Jenny Lemberg and Mikaela Spence each had two hits for Pepe's.

In the deciding game, Burke had four hits while Barschdorf had two hits and four runs scored. Nicole Orton added three hits and three RBI's. Rocca four hits and Burt three hits.

EGG-CITEMENT

Pittsfield's annual Easter Egg Hunt took place Saturday afternoon.



Filling, carrying and dispersing 4,000 plastic Easter Eggs is a monumental task for volunteers.

Above, Art Raney and Tom Cowlin deliver a heavy box containing 1,000 eggs.

At right, Carol Mazza works feverishly to get the eggs ready for placement on the gymnasium floor at the Boys' & Girls' Club.

Since the hunt is conducted in four separate sessions by age group, the volunteers must move quickly to restock the floor for each age group.



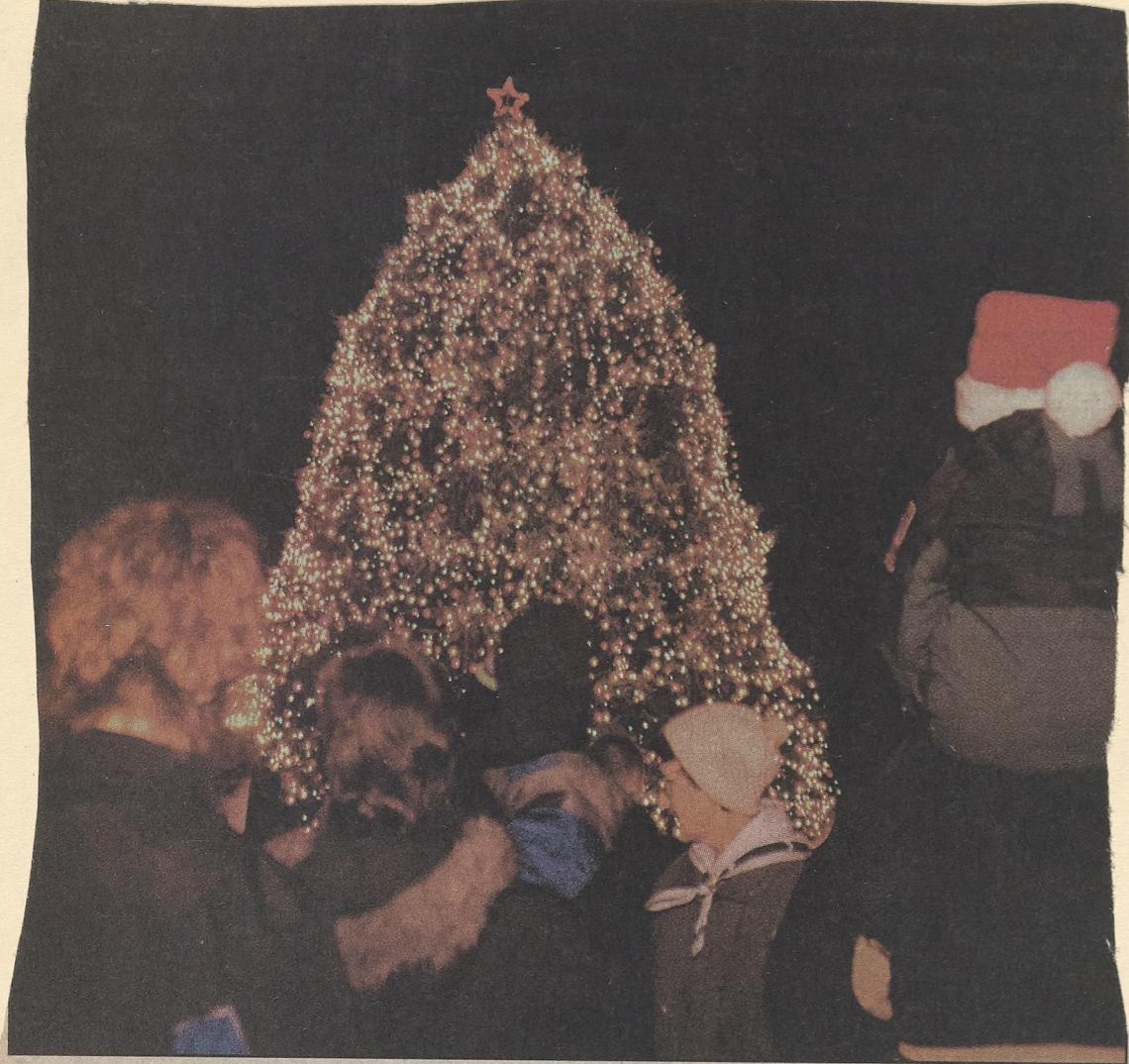
Patience is a must as youngsters await their turn to harvest the eggs. The actual hunt takes about 90 seconds per group.



With baskets and plastic bags in hand, the youngsters grab the colorful eggs which contain jelly beans. A few eggs in each group entitle the finders to special prizes.



Most kids approach the egg-gathering with gusto and excitement. Almost without exception, they're well behaved. Some parents, however, aren't quite as polite as they exhort their youngsters to pick up as many eggs as possible.



A beacon for Santa

Pittsfield's Christmas tree is lighted at the annual ceremony on Park Square last night, as a crowd estimated at several hundred looks on. Caroling followed, led by baritone Paul Nixon.

12/13/99



Tree ceremony scheduled

The parks department will hold a Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Park Square on Thursday, December 2 at 7 p.m. The free ceremony will include community caroling under the direction of Paul Nixon.

This year, a 35-foot blue spruce was donated by the Ronald Plankey family of Highland Avenue. The tree was cut and placed at Park Square by the Parks Department maintenance staff and decorated by the city's Department of Emergency Management.

11/25/99



Long-distance call

Edmund and Grace Germanowski make a call to a child in Pittsfield last night as part of the Department of Community Services/Parks and Recreation's 18th annual North Pole Calling program. Volunteer Santas and 'North Pole operators' will make more calls tonight. Last year, more than 375 children received calls from Santa.

12/11/99

Halloween parade starts at 7 p.m.

Pittsfield's 55th annual Halloween Parade will take place Friday at 7 p.m.

Sponsored by the parks department, this year's event will form on East Street in front of Girls Incorporated and Pittsfield High School. The parade route proceeds to Park Square, up North Street to Wahconah Street.

Sheriff Carmen Massimiano is the grand marshal of the parade.

Cash prizes will be awarded for three floats and three musical units. In addition, judges will award 25 individual costume awards to children marching in the parade. The costume awards are sponsored by Friendly's restaurants.

Marching units will line up on the PHS side of East Street not later than 6:30 p.m.; floats and vehicles will line up on the north side of East Street.

The parade lineup:

1. Pittsfield Police Cruiser
2. Parks & Recreation Department Vehicle
3. V.F.W. Post 448 Color Guard
4. Halloween Parade Grand Marshal—Sheriff Carmen C. Massimiano
5. Berkshire County House of Correction Float & Marchers
6. Pittsfield Fire Truck & Sparky
7. Pittsfield Winter Carnival Queen
8. Eagles Band
9. Allendale School Marchers
10. Stearns School Float
11. Stearns School Marchers
12. Highland School Float
13. Highland School Marchers
14. W.U.P.E.
15. Lanesboro Tigers Cheerleaders
16. Pittsfield High School Band
17. Pittsfield High School Color Guard
18. Pittsfield High School Cheerleaders
19. Egremont School Float
20. Egremont School Marchers
21. School Bus—Handicapped Children Float (sponsored by bus drivers/operators)
22. Berkshire Mountain Home School Co-Operative
23. Crosby School Marchers
24. Taconic High School Band
25. Taconic High School Cheerleaders
26. Williams School Marchers
27. W.B.E.C.—105.5 Float
28. Morningside School Marchers
29. Conte School Float
30. Conte School Marchers
31. Berkshire Artisans Van
32. Pittsfield 4th of July Parade Float
33. Pittsfield Police Cruiser

10/28/99

The Pittsfield Gazette November 4, 1999

Twenty-Minute Monster March



The annual Halloween Parade primarily focuses on younger children, but the downtown event also offers the city high schools an opportunity to showcase their marching bands.



The annual Halloween Parade — held this past Friday — is a special nocturnal event for youngsters who ride on floats, march in groups and watch from the sidelines.

While monsters are a perennial parade theme (at left), Egremont School took a more modern concept this year (above) with a float depicting computer horrors.



Easter egg hunt set for Saturday, April 3

The 1999 Pittsfield Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 3. The event is co-sponsored by the Pittsfield Exchange Club, Pittsfield Boys & Girls Club and the Department of Parks & Recreation. The hunt will be held at the Pittsfield Boys' & Girls' Club.

The hunt will start at 1 p.m. for 2 & 3 year olds; 1:30 p.m. for 4 & 5 year olds; 2 p.m. for 6 & 7 year olds; and 2:30 p.m. for 8 & 9 year olds. All age divisions will be held in the gym.

The free event is open to Pittsfield children only. Prizes will be awarded in each age group for finding the green, blue, orange, yellow and purple egg. Children are required to bring their own bags or baskets.

For further information call 499-9343.

3/25/99

Egg hunt is April 3 in Pittsfield

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks & Recreation has announced that the city's annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Pittsfield Boys' & Girls' Club on Melville Street.

The hunt will start at 1 for 2 & 3-year-olds; 1:30 for 4 & 5-year-olds; 2 for 6 & 7-year-olds; and 2:30 for 8 & 9-year-olds. All age divisions will be held in the gym.

The event is open to Pittsfield children only. Prizes will be awarded in each age group for finding the green, blue, orange, yellow and purple egg. Children are required to bring their own bags or baskets.

Participants are asked to use front entrance of the Boys' & Girls' Club on Melville Street.

Information: Department of Parks & Recreation at 499-9343.

3/31/99

Board schedules 1999 Halloween event dates

Halloween will be observed on October 29 and 30 in Pittsfield this year. The park commission on Monday endorsed following the event calendar utilized in 1998, with activities scheduled for the weekend.

"It seemed like it worked out well," said community services director Bob Mellace.

The Halloween parade will be held on Friday, October 29 at 7 p.m. Trick or treat will be held on Saturday, October 30 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

8/5/99



Above the hurly burly



Photos by Jared Leeds / Berkshire Eagle

A spectator at left watches the scramble from a peaceful perch in the bleachers as kids scurry for as many eggs as possible in the 30 or so seconds before they're all gone. The action was yesterday at the Pittsfield Boys' and Girls' Club's annual Easter egg hunt.

Halloween parade meeting Friday

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/Parks & Recreation announces that the first organizational meeting for the city's Halloween parade has been set for this Friday at 7 p.m. at Springside House, 874 North St.

Local organizations are invited to attend the meeting if they plan to enter a float, band or marching unit.

All entries must have a theme that is Halloween-related and any group wishing to participate should have a representative at this meeting.

Groups interested in further information may call the Department of Parks & Recreation at 499-9343.

The 55th annual Halloween parade will be held Friday, Oct. 29. The parade is sponsored by the Department of Parks & Recreation.

9/18/79

Halloween parade meeting tomorrow

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks and Recreation and Department of Community Service's second organizational meeting for the 55th annual Halloween parade will be tomorrow.

There is still time to enter floats, bands or marching units in the parade, according to the groups.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. at the Springside House, 874 North St.

Any group willing to participate must have a representative present at the meeting.

Those interested in further information, but who are unable to attend the meeting, should call the recreation department at 499-9343.

10/14/99

I was just wondering what geniuses are responsible for establishing Pittsfield's trick-or-treat on Saturday (Oct. 30). I am sure it will be really scary and cool this year for the kids when they go trick-or-treating and it is light outside. Why was it not scheduled for Sunday (Oct. 31), after the clocks have been turned back, so that Halloween will be more fun. I do not remember as a child ever trick-or-treating in daylight. That is not my idea of fun and/or spooky.

10/29/99

Santa to call Pittsfield children Dec. 13 and 14

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Community Services/Park & Recreation will be conducting its eighth annual North Pole Calling Program on Monday, Dec. 13, and Tuesday, Dec. 14, from 4:30 to 7.

Volunteer Santas and operators will be making personal phone calls to Pittsfield children only.

Information sheets have been sent home with children in Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2.

Forms are also available at the Recreation Office, 874 North St., and are to be returned by Friday, Dec. 10.

Last year, more than 375 children were called by Santa.

Downtown heartbeat

To The Editor of THE EAGLE: I would like to offer a belated congratulations to the Parks Department on a job well done on the 30th annual Halloween Parade. I attended it with my family and enjoyed every minute of it.

I also noticed that there is something happening in downtown Pittsfield. There are more stores/companies moving back to North Street. A quaint unique store caught my eye, Another Closet. I believe this store to be an antique shop.

In my mind this store, along with the ones surrounding it, will be the heartbeat for central North Street and I hope these stores are here to stay. Welcome to downtown!

KATHLEEN CICCIENELLO
MARK PASQUAIELLO
Pittsfield, Nov. 5, 1999

Pittsfield Halloween Parade draws large crowd

By Lisa Gosselin
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — It was an eerie evening on North Street last night as the ghosts, goblins, witches and "Scream" characters emerged from the darkness to take the spotlight.

The 55th annual Halloween Parade, sponsored by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, featured hundreds of costumed creatures, floats and bands.

13,000 turn out

The Pittsfield Police Department estimated a crowd of 13,000 on the unseasonably warm October evening, said Parks and Recreation Director John C. Marchesi.

"All in all, it was a very successful parade," Marchesi said.

Among the spectators who lined North and East streets were Dumbo, Teletubbies, Chip, without his partner Dale, pumpkins and little American Indians.

Vendors sold pumpkins, Pooh and Blue's Clues balloons along the parade route, while a long line formed in front of the popcorn stand.

The 20-minute parade opened with the Pittsfield Police and Berkshire County Sheriff's Department vehicles sounding their sirens.

It included adult-size Sesame Street characters Elmo and Oscar the Grouch, a pair of walking eyeballs, a werewolf, the Y2K (lady) bugs, Santa Claus and his golden retriever reindeer and a Pittsfield school bus decorated as an angry red monster.

Members of the Pittsfield Parade Committee carried a large balloon skull, as parents carried some of the young weary-eyed paraders down the route.

Prize-winners named

Egremont School took first place, for a \$150 prize, for its Happy Boo Year float, which played Prince's "1999." A pumpkin that was supposed to drop like the New Year's Eve ball, however, failed to function.

Highland School won second place (\$125) for its "Monster Mash" float, which featured a variety of monsters, devils and witches.

Stearns School's "It's a spooky small

PARADE, continued on B5



Shannon DeCelle / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Children dressed as Eeyore the Donkey, left, and Darth Maul, carrying a light sabre, stand on the steps of the First Massachusetts Bank building as the annual Halloween Parade marches down North Street in Pittsfield last night.

Parade from B1

"world" float on which American Indians, ghosts, cowboys and princesses rode placed third (\$100).

The three bands that participated also took home prizes, with Taconic High School placing first (\$150), Pittsfield High School second (\$125), and the Eagles Band third (\$100).

Before and after the parade, youngsters and their parents lined up for a tour of a haunted house at the Pittsfield Police Department. Some little ones ran screaming out the entrance and some clung, crying, to their parents' legs, while others taunted the frightful creatures as if they were the ones who should be afraid.

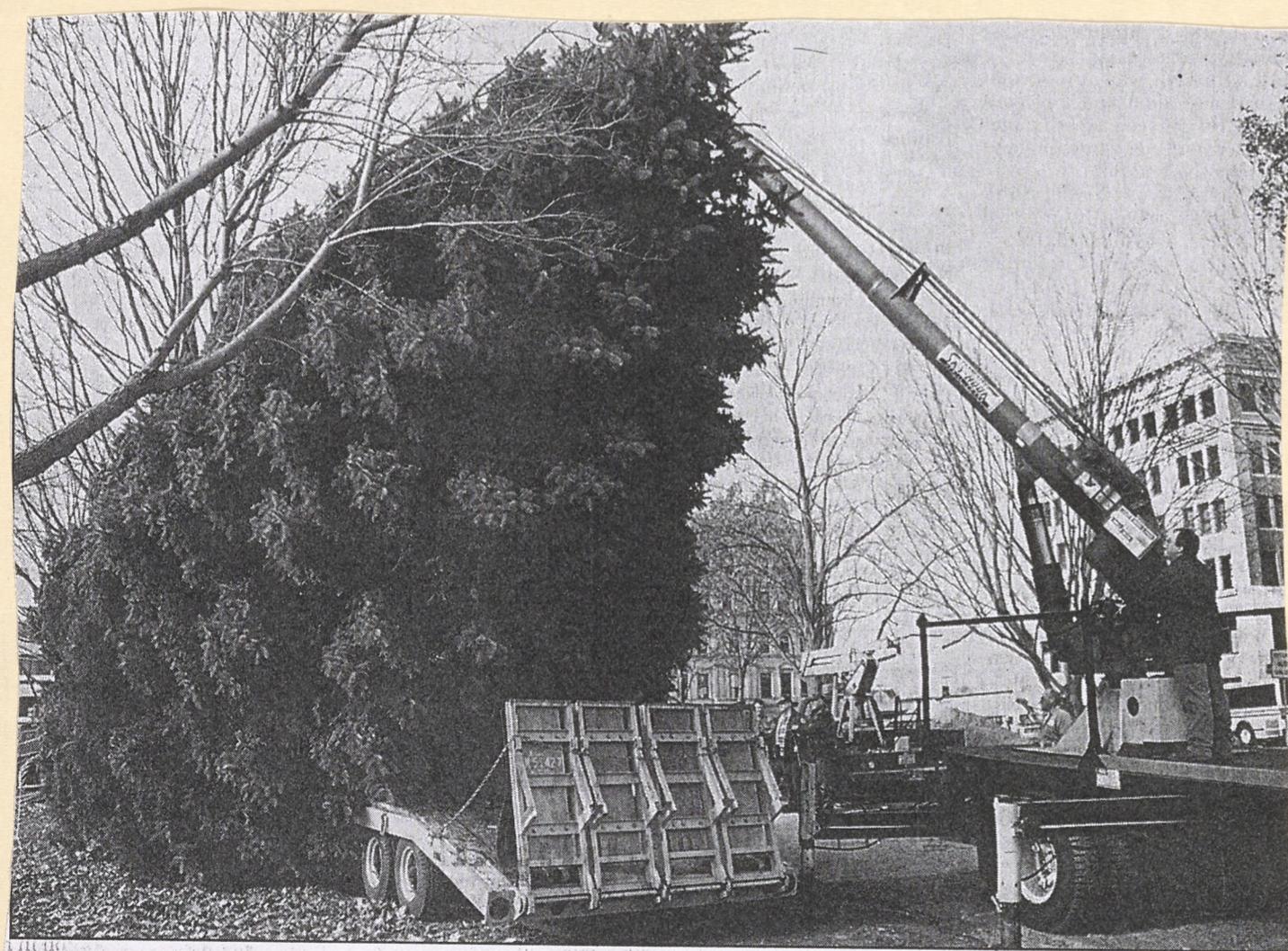
The brave souls who made it through received orange and

black balloons, as well as apples, cider, candy and coloring books.

First they made their way through dark rooms filled with cobwebs and corpses that grabbed unsuspecting visitors, a young girl with an amputated and bleeding leg and a princess with blood dripping from her neck.

The free event was sponsored by the Police Department, Kiwanis of Pittsfield, Pittsfield High School drama students and the National Grange Mutual Insurance Co.

10/30/99



11/23/99

Park placement

Members of the Pittsfield Park Department staff erect a 35-foot blue spruce, donated by the Ronald Plankey family of Highland Avenue, at Park Square yesterday in preparation for the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. It will be

held Thursday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. and will include community caroling under the direction of Paul Nixon. The tree will be decorated, as usual, by the city's Department of Emergency Management, supervised by Director Thomas Grizley.

Santa's special helpers call Pittsfield youngsters

continued from page 1

The calls were arranged with parents in advance, so the volunteers knew the children's names, whether they have pets, the names of family members and, of course, what they want for Christmas.

Yet even with Santa's magic, the kids sometimes threw St. Nick for a loop, which of course is part of the fun. "He said 'I hope you're not going to be like the Grinch and steal the Christmas Tree,'" laughing Sacchetti reported after finishing one call. "I told him I would never do that."

Lou and Barb Graham have been pinch hitting for the Clauses for several years. "It's a riot," Barb Graham said. "It's really the funniest thing in the world; you wouldn't believe what they say."

"One of them wanted to talk to one of my elves," Lou Graham said, chuckling. "I told him the elves are too busy out in the workshop packing up bundles."

Jim Hassett has been a volunteer Santa for nearly 10 years. His secret? "Just give them a chance to talk," he said. "That's it."

Just a few minutes listening in on Santa's phone line demonstrates that kids still believe in the Jolly Old Elf. The thought of talking to Santa leaves some youngsters speechless, the volunteers report. Other children are difficult to get off the phone, until



Lou & Barb Graham enjoy becoming Santa and Mrs. Claus. The Grahams are among the many volunteers who delight local children with the "North Pole Calling" program.

local schools to students in kindergarten through second grade. The form includes room for listing the gifts a child has requested and, even more importantly, space for listing the gifts the child will actually receive.

The goal is to enhance a child's holiday, and not create unrealistic expectations.

Parents can also send special messages, such as recognizing a child's improved school work or relationship with a sibling.

The program is now in its 18th year and Marchesi feels that it continues to make Christmas a little more special for kids — as well as their parents.

"The parents are so appreciative," Marchesi says. "Sometimes after the kids get off the phone the parents pick up and say 'this is just great'. They get to see their kids' eyes light up when they pick up the phone."

Santa's helpers call children

It is a matter of courtesy to telephone before dropping in on a friend. Even if one is dropping down the chimney.

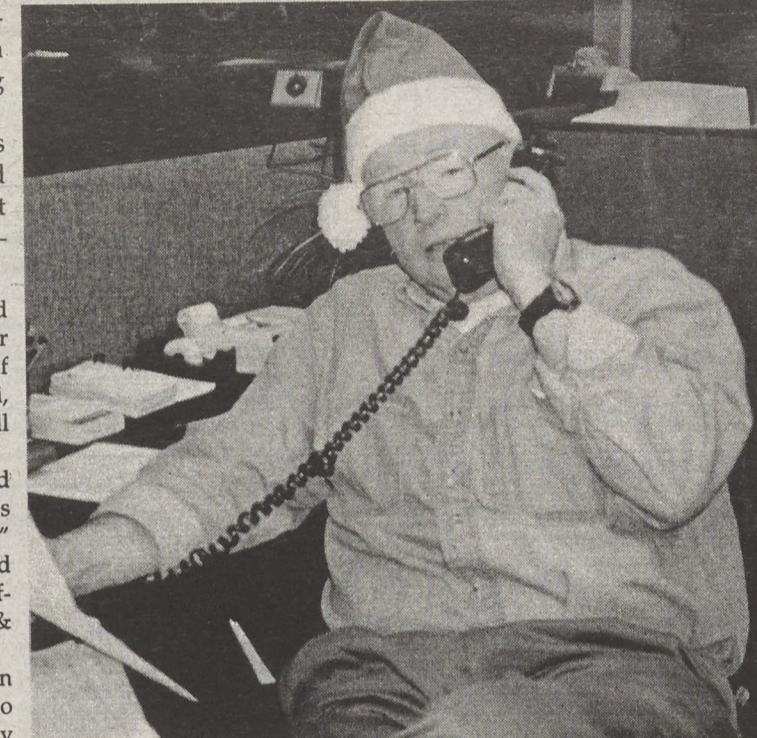
So Santa Claus took time this week to call hundreds of Pittsfield children to let them know that Christmas Eve is on its way — and he's coming to town.

"I want you to keep up the good work in school and be good to your brothers and sisters," advised one of Santa's helpers, Anthony Sacchetti, on Tuesday evening. "Santa loves all of you girls and boys."

Nearly 400 local kids received phone calls through the parks department's "North Pole Calling" program. Volunteer Santas worked the phones at the Berkshire Bank offices on North Street on Monday & Tuesday night.

The volunteers often worked in teams — Santa and Mrs. Claus — to place the calls. Mrs. Claus typically announces "This is the North Pole calling" and asks for the child.

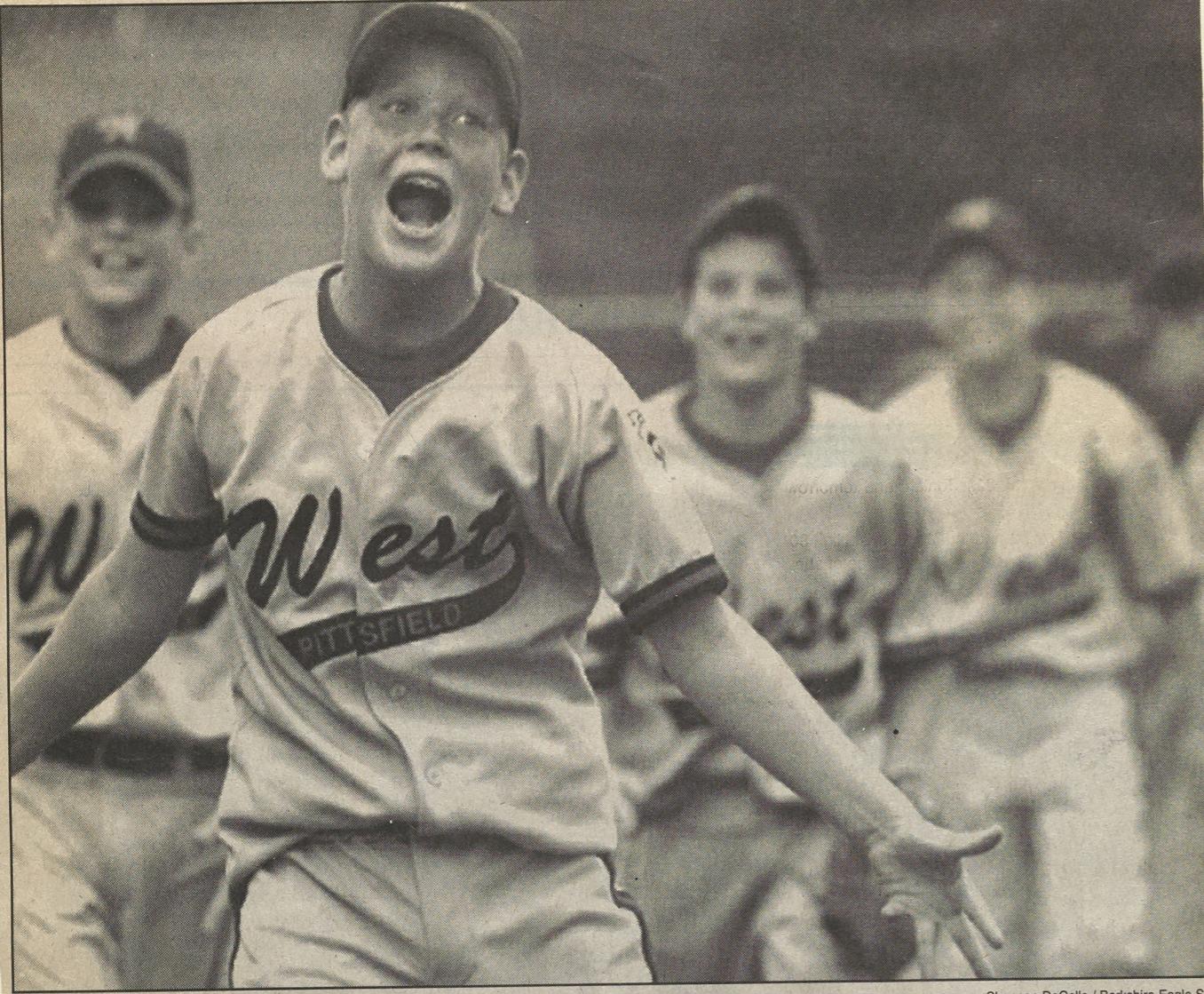
See SANTA page 23



Santa's helper Jim Hassett was among volunteers to participate in the parks department's annual "North Pole Calling" program. This year, Santas chatted with nearly 400 children.

Wild, wild West

7/25/99



Mike Martin, of Pittsfield West, is flanked by teammates Dempsey Quinn, left, and Mike Cullen following their sixth inning come-from-behind win over North Adams in Great Barrington yesterday.

P-West extends county L.L. series with dramatic win over N. Adams

By Bill Stewart

Berkshire Eagle Staff

GREAT BARRINGTON — Just call them the comeback kids who aren't ready to go home just yet.

Down 5-2 in its last at bat, Pittsfield West rallied for six runs on four hits to stave off elimination in the Berkshire County Little League tournament by edging North Adams 8-5 to force a decisive championship game rematch tomorrow at 5:30 at the Olympia Meadows complex.

"We've been talking all season just how difficult this tournament is," said Pittsfield West coach Michael Cullen, whose troops handed North Adams its first loss of the double-elimination tournament. "North Adams is a great team and we knew we might get behind."

West won't quit

But the little engines that could refused to go down as Devin Mackey capped the sixth-inning fury with a long single to deep center field that enabled Dempsey Quinn and Mike Cullen to circle the bases with the eventual game-winning runs.

After Chris Phillips walked to lead off the top of the sixth, Jason Krieger laced a double that pelted the left-field fence to help pump a renowned sense of excitement and hope into the Pittsfield West dugout. And that was just the beginning.

Starting left fielder Mike Martin closed North Adams' lead to 5-4 when he poked a single in the hole to left to bring home Phillips and Krieger, who also pitched the complete game win for Pittsfield West.

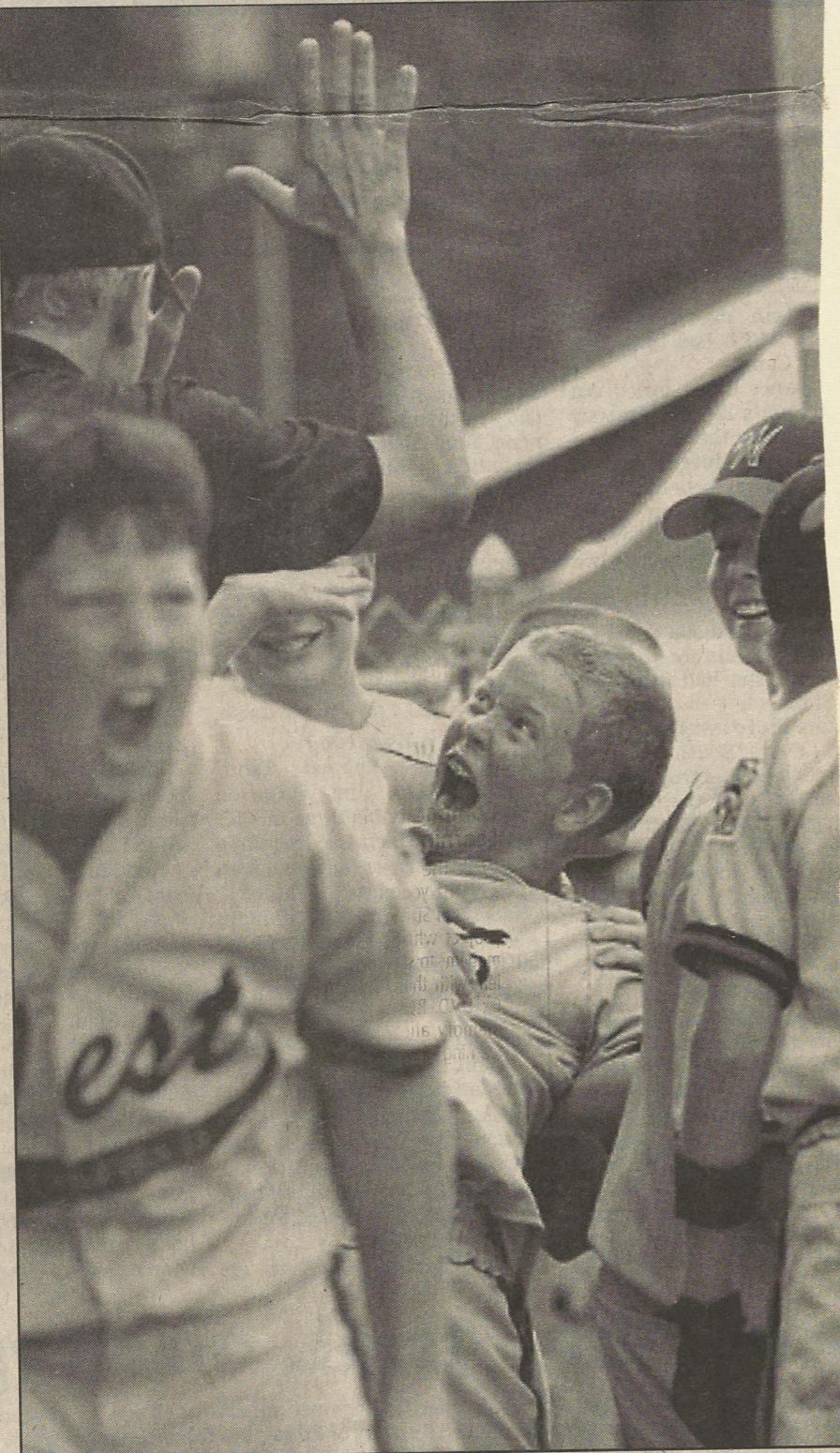
"It was cool," said Martin about his hit.

But things were still just getting started. With a modest crowd ingesting the event at the roasting Olympia Meadows complex, Quinn roped a triple to deep right center to bring Martin around from first with the tying run.

After North Adams pitcher Nate Girard walked Cullen and Dan Harrington, Mackey got a hold of a high fastball and nearly punched it out of the park to complete the comeback.

"At first I thought I hit it out so I wasn't running very hard," said Mackey, whose only hit of the day proved to be the biggest. "But then I saw two runs had scored."

And it was enough. Krieger, who worked out of several jams in the early innings, retired North Adams in order in



Pittsfield West's Mike Martin, center, is congratulated after scoring on Dempsey Quinn's triple in the sixth inning. At left is teammate Chris Phillips.

WEST, continued on C3



Shannon DeCelle / Berkshire Eagle Staff
North Adams runner Kevin Trombley scores one of his team's four fourth-inning runs during Berkshire County Little League tournament play yesterday in Great Barrington. Mike Cullen is the Pittsfield West catcher. The West all-stars came out of the loser's bracket to win the game and force a deciding game tomorrow at 5:30.

West from C1

the bottom of the sixth with three of his game-high 10 strikeouts.

"In the beginning when I was getting hit I felt bad," Krieger said. "But then I got into the flow and began to throw strikes. I was pumped up going out in the last inning."

With the two teams struggling to push across a run in the game's opening three innings, North Adams finally ended the string of zeros on the scoreboard with a four-run fourth inning on two clutch hits.

Zach Branan, who drove in one run and scored twice for North Adams, opened the inning with a rocket shot to straight away center that appeared as though it would leave the yard when it left his stick. After Kevin Trombley was hit by a pitch, Collin Downey reached on an error to bring home the first run of the game for either

side.

Craig Yannone promptly followed with an opposite field single to right to plate two more which staked North Adams to a 3-0 lead. North Adams would add another run via a wild pitch before Pittsfield West supplied a little offense of its own in the fifth on a Cullen RBI triple and a Tucker Sheran sacrifice fly.

Although Branan nearly missed a round tripper in the fourth, he made it a sure thing in the fifth when he ripped a towering homer to give North Adams a three-run lead heading into the sixth.

"The players got down a little bit but as soon as the rally began they got confident," Cullen said, who, in all likelihood, will put Harrington on the mound tomorrow in the final.

West from C1 7/27/99

behind the eight ball as Pittsfield West scored what proved to be the winning run in its half of the first when Devin Mackey poked a single in the right field gap to plate Dempsey Quinn, who led off the inning with a walk.

Pittsfield West looked to add another run in the inning but catcher Mike Cullen was thrown out at the plate on a strong throw by second baseman Jason Engwer, who took the cutoff throw from right fielder Mike Pitt. It was the first of two runners that North Adams gunned down at the plate to help keep the game close.

Quinn, who reached base in two of his three at bats, scored Pittsfield West's second run when he scampered home from third on a wild pitch. And while the offense was doing its part, Harrington was busy doing his.

The tall right-hander struck out the side in the first two innings, although any thoughts of throwing his second no-hitter in the tournament were dashed when Engwer singled to center in the first. It would take until its last at bat before North Adams would record its only other hit.

"We didn't get to the pitcher," said Jerry Engwer. "He's an outstanding ballplayer that we couldn't get to."

"I was throwing a fastball and a sidearm fastball," said Harrington, who is eligible to pitch in Friday's game because of the rule changes that exist at different levels in state tournament play. "It's all I throw."

And it was all he needed.

Pittsfield West capped the scoring with a run in the fifth inning before Harrington whiffed two of the four North Adams players he faced in the sixth to ice the win.

The Berkshire Eagle, Friday, July 30, 1999 — C3

Pittsfield West set for playoff battle

By Bill Stewart

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The road to the Massachusetts Little League championship is narrowing. But the optimism surrounding the possibility of a Pittsfield West state title is widening.

After upending a feisty North Adams squad in consecutive games to swipe the District 1 crown, Pittsfield West advanced to Little League's version of the Sweet 16 tournament, which gets under way today.

And for Pittsfield West, which is slated to battle District 2 champion Easthampton today in Great Barrington at 5:30, the voyage toward state supremacy is launched.

But just how much does Pittsfield West know about its opponent in the opening round of the state's Bi-Sectionals?

"Nothing at all," said coach Michael Cullen, whose team ascended the District 1 summit while playing out of the loser's bracket. "But any team coming out of District 2 is going to be tough. That is a strong bracket."

Last season, Western Massachusetts perennial power Westfield North of District 2 advanced to the state semifinals, where it lost to Swampscott 13-5 in Taunton. Defending state champion Newton North failed to qualify

for the Bi-Sectionals.

"Amherst also plays out of that district so you know Easthampton has to be good," added Cullen.

The winner of today's game at the Olympia Meadows Complex marches directly to the Sectionals Monday with a tilt in Leominster against the winner of the game between Division 3 champion Leominster American and District 4 champion Worcester.

"The District 1 tournament is a challenge," said Cullen, "but once you leave it only gets tougher."

Especially since any team seriously entertaining the notion of progressing all the way to Bristol, Conn., to represent Massachusetts in the Regionals will rely on an abundance of arms coupled with some hot bats and a few good bounces to go their way. And although Cullen is confident in a pitching staff that he says dips six deep, his rotation suffered a setback when Jason Krieger broke his hand in a basketball game this week.

"We're able to replace Jason," said Cullen, who plans to ask Pittsfield's Elmar Uy to join the team and fill the void. "But we're five or six pitchers deep and we should be OK. It's really too bad though."

Dan Harrington, whose wicked fastball

helped Pittsfield West win the District 1 title, is expected to pitch today on three day's rest for the second consecutive game. However, should Harrington throw one pitch in the second inning he would be ineligible to throw in Monday's game should Pittsfield West get by Easthampton.

"The coaches talked about what to do," said Cullen, on the decision to throw Harrington today rather than hold off. "I've learned in Little League that anything can happen and it usually does. You have to win the game you're playing in. Throwing on three days rest for the second time in a row is a lot to ask for a 12 year old, but he'll have a lot of adrenaline."

Should the tank push empty, Cullen will look to Tucker Sheran, Mike Cullen Jr., Devin Mackey, Chris Phillips and Adam O'Brien to share the pitching mound duties.

While Pittsfield West is receiving a balanced attack at the plate, Cullen pointed to Dempsey Quinn as the sparkplug to help ignite run-scoring rallies.

The other state tournament teams include the following: Shrewsbury, Taunton East American, Canton, Middleboro, South Boston American, Parkway, Norwood, Malden, Stoneham, Andover American, Danvers, and Swampscott.

Pittsfield West, N. Adams win in Little League tourney

GREAT BARRINGTON — Pittsfield West and North Adams rolled on in the Berkshire County age 11-12 Little League baseball tournament, as both won yesterday.

North Adams beat Sheffield 10-7, while Pittsfield West shut out Pittsfield South 5-0, in winner's bracket games.

In the loser's bracket of the double-elimination tournament, Pittsfield North eliminated Cheshire 2-1, while Adams knocked out Williamstown 10-8.

Play continues tomorrow, with Great Barrington playing Lee and Adams playing Pittsfield North. Games begin at 5:45 p.m., at Olympia Meadows.

Dan Harrington tossed a complete-game, two-hit shutout for Pittsfield West, striking out 11. Dempsey Quinn had three hits and two runs batted in, while Devon Mackey added two hits and an RBI. John Pavolka was the losing pitcher.

7/18/99

Pittsfield West advances to L.L. championship game

GREAT BARRINGTON — Pittsfield West fought its way out of the loser's bracket to advance to the Berkshire County Little League championship game against unbeaten North Adams tomorrow at noon at Olympia Meadows field.

The Pittsfield squad advanced following a 5-1 win over Great Barrington last night. Winning pitcher Dan Harrington struck out eight, allowed four hits and did not walk a batter.

7/19/99

Pittsfield teams take pair in Little League tournament

GREAT BARRINGTON — Two Pittsfield Little League teams traveled south last night to play in the Berkshire County tournament at the Olympia Meadows fields in Great Barrington.

Both headed home with wins.

Action will continue tonight with two more games.

In one, North Adams will take on Williamstown. Pittsfield North will play Sheffield in the other.

David Glass pitched four innings of two hit baseball and struck out six to lead Pittsfield South to a 5-4 win over Cheshire. No other information was available.

7/15/99

In the other game, Dan Harrington homered and doubled and Mike Cullen and Tucker Sheran combined on a three-hitter to lead Pittsfield West to a 12-4 win over Adams.

Devon Mackey and Sheran also had two hits for West.

Karl Mello had two hits for Adams.

The tournament is scheduled to run until Sunday, July 26, which would be if the game.

The District 1 versus District 2 contest has been scheduled for July 30.

That winner would play again on Aug. 2 against the D 3-4 winner.

7/15/99

Pittsfield Little League sets sign-up

The Pittsfield Little League baseball program has scheduled registration for players ages 9-12 March 27 from 10 a.m. to noon, March 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. and March 31 from 6 to 8 p.m. Locations are Peck's Road fire station for the North League, Holmes Road fire station for the South League and West Housatonic Street fire station for the West League.

A birth certificate is required at registration. Information: 499-9343.

3/19/99

Little League clinic slated at Taconic

A free baseball clinic for all Little League candidates ages 8-12 is scheduled Saturday, March 20, from 9 to noon at Taconic High School. There will be instruction in all fundamentals, and door prizes will be awarded. Information: 443-1618 or 447-8304.

Little League registration scheduled

Registration for Pittsfield's Little League baseball program will be held Saturday, March 27 from 10 a.m. to noon; Monday, March 29 from 6 to 8 p.m.; and Wednesday, March 31 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Sign up for youths ages 9 to 12 will take place at the Pecks Road, Holmes

Road and West Housatonic Street fire stations.

Birth certificates and proof of residency must be presented at registration.

For information call 499-9343.

3/18/99

North Little League tryout today

The Pittsfield North Little League has scheduled tryouts today at 10 at the Brown Street Field on Springside Avenue. Children ages 9 to 12 may register at the park with a parent, and must have a birth certificate and proof of residence. Tryouts are also scheduled tomorrow. Information: 443-3787.

4/10/99

North Little League seeks umpires

The Pittsfield North Little League is seeking umpires for the upcoming season. Anyone interested should contact umpire-in-chief John Duda, 443-4550.

4/28/99

► **PITTSFIELD:** The Little League will hold its annual candy sale this Saturday from 9 to 1.

Uniformed players from all three city leagues will sell candy door to door with proceeds to benefit the Pittsfield Little League Baseball Program. The sale is the Little League's only city-wide fund-raiser of the year.

6/19/99

Pittsfield South Red wins Jimmy Fund title

By Tom Ryan
Berkshire Eagle Staff

DALTON — Home runs and double plays are every day occurrences at the highest levels of baseball. At the age 9-10 year old level, they are a rarity. Yesterday in the Jimmy Fund tournament final at Chamberlain Field, Pittsfield South Red hit not one, but two round-trippers and turned a 4-6-3 double play as well in holding on for a 5-4 win over Cheshire.

"I think our game with Pittsfield West on Saturday might have carried over into today," said South coach Al Bianchi, whose team rallied for five runs in the eighth inning to beat cross town rival West 9-4. "Two kids hit their first home runs and we turned a double play. You don't see that to often at this level."

In the first inning, Pittsfield South Red came out swinging. For two of their first four batters, their first plate appearance in the game would be one they will never forget.

Christian Bianchi led off with a hit to center and Benjamin Joslyn followed with a hit to left. Jeff Fields, whose batter's box antics were ironically similar to the Boston Red Sox Nomar Garciaparra, then stepped into a fastball and drilled it high and deep over the left-centerfield fence, touching off quite a celebration for Fields' first career homer.

Again, Cheshire came back. Two batters later Jessie Rose joined Fields in the "Touch Them All For The First Time" club as he sent a pitch over the right-centerfield fence.

"Neither one of those two had ever hit the ball out of the park before, so it was first time thrill for them," said Bianchi.

Undaunted by the rough start, Cheshire came right back with a couple of runs in the top of the second.

Chad Biel opened the inning with one of his three hits on the day, a double to left and then went to third on a wild pitch. Gary

7/19/99

The Berkshire Eagle, Wednesday, July 28, 1999 — C3



Berkshire County champions

Yes, we know. Fortunately the Berkshire County champion Pittsfield West Little League all-stars play baseball better than the company that made the victory banner can spell. Pittsfield West, the District 1 champion, will play District 2 champion Easthampton on Friday at 5:30 at Olympia Meadow in Great Barrington. Team members include, from left, FRONT ROW: Josh Arico, Anthony Ringie, Mike Martin, Mike Cullen, Jason Krieger and T.J. Bowler. BACK ROW: Coach Dan Sheran, Team coach Mark Ringie, Mark Loehr, Adam O'Brien, Colin Tierney, Tucker Sheran, Dan Harrington, Chris Phillips, Dempsey Quinn, Manager Mike Cullen and Devin Mackey.

Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

There is a city Little League champion

To The Editor of THE EAGLE: In April of 1999, a Samel's Team was formed at South Little League's Deming Field. The team played as a united group throughout the entire season. The season ended with a record of 20-2, but one game too early!

On Wednesday, July 28, the league champions from the North and South faced each other in the semi-finals. Before the game began, representatives from the North and South leagues were informed that the winner of that game (the South vs. the North game) would be scheduled to play the West champions on Aug. 2. Parents postponed vacations and rearranged schedules to accommodate the date given. (South champs prevailed in an exciting game.)

Samel's players continued to practice, even though the season

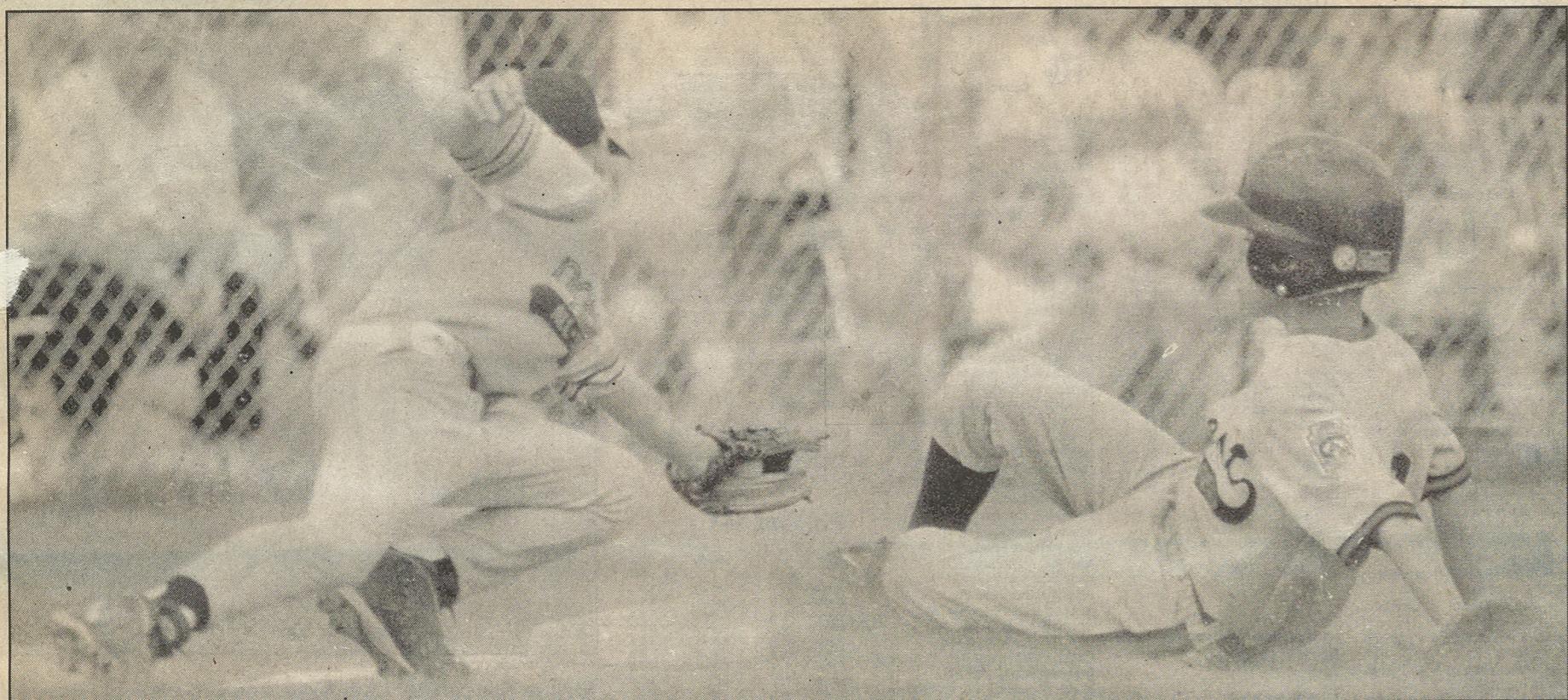
officially ended on August 3, in the expectation of playing a final game to declare a city champion.

Regardless of the reason, the final game was never played. As parents of a Samel's player, we commend our coaches for the way they handled this disappointing turn of events. They had made every player feel as though he was a crucial part of the team. The players had been encouraged to believe that one player does not make a team. All players knew they needed to work together to be successful.

In our eyes, there is a city champion. Samel's diligently practiced and coaches Joe Skutnik, Andy Barber and Scott Lovellette gave their all to the very end. We are proud of the members of the Samel's squad!

KATHIE AND BILL BROWN
Pittsfield, Aug. 5, 1999

9/2/99



Pittsfield West's Dempsey Quinn slides safely into third base during play yesterday in the third inning of the Berkshire County Little League championship game against North Adams. Taking the throw is North Adams third-sacker Craig Yannone.

Pittsfield West kings of county

Harrington shines in win over N. Adams

By Bill Stewart
Berkshire Eagle Staff

GREAT BARRINGTON — In anticipation of facing one of Berkshire County Little League's hardest flame-throwers in the Berkshire County championship game, North Adams coach Jerry Engwer did a few things differently in batting practice this weekend.

"We moved the plate up about five feet," said Engwer, who also turned to some of his superstitions in preparation for last night's showdown against Pittsfield West. "Then we just had some guys throw as hard as they could at our guys."

But last night at the Olympia Meadows Complex nothing could stop Dan Harrington from turning in yet another dominating performance on the mound.

Harrington struck out 12 and allowed two hits en route to Pittsfield West's title-clinching 3-0 blanking over North Adams.

Dominated the tournament

Harrington previously pitched a no-hitter and a four-hitter in the tournament which saw the Pittsfield club come through the loser's bracket.

With the win, Pittsfield West will now face District 2 champion Easthampton Friday night at Olympia Meadow at 5:30. The victor dives deeper in the state tournament with a date in Leominster against the winner of the District 3 and 4 game on Monday.

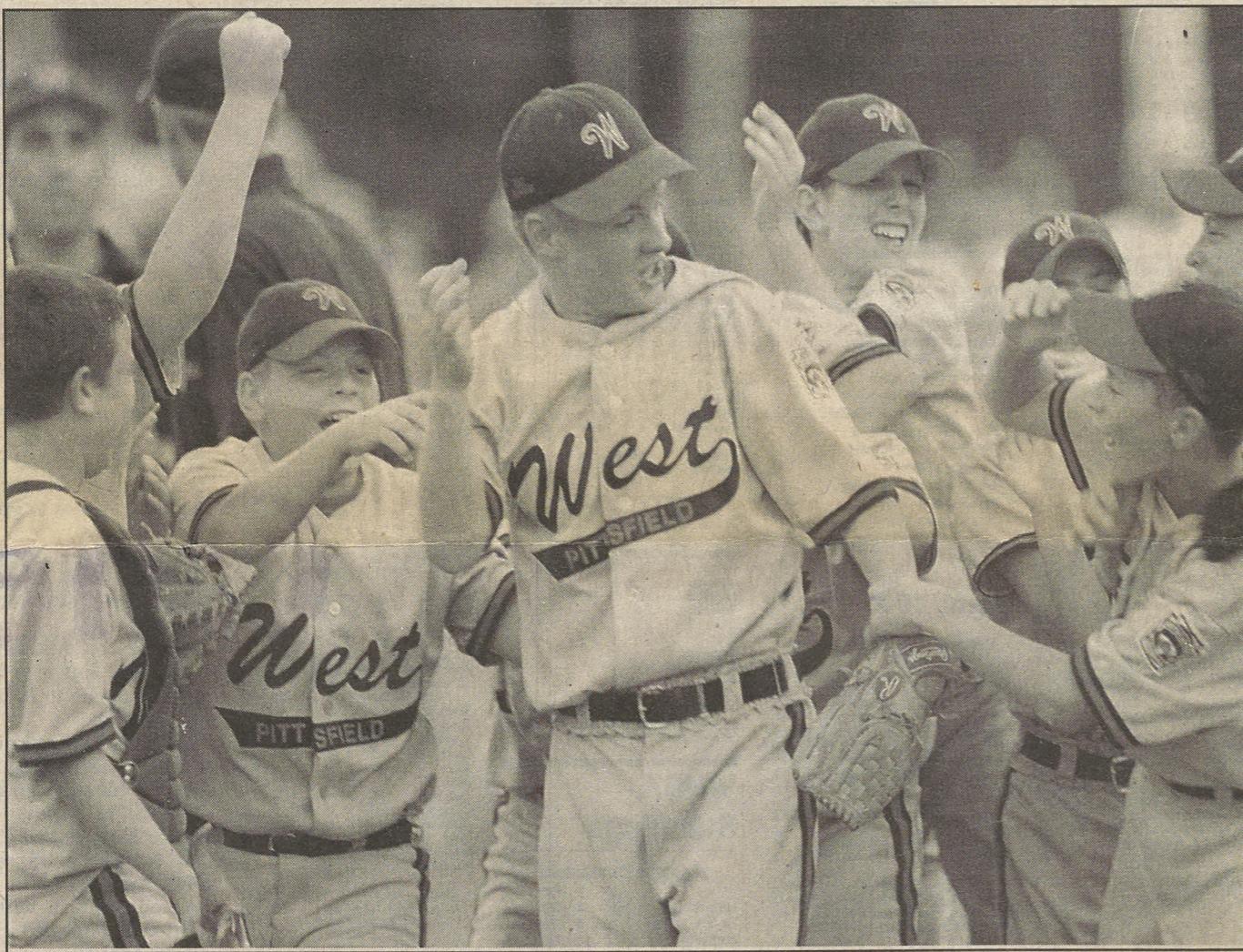
"I was excited to win the championship because I wanted to win it bad," said Harrington, who allowed just four runners as Pittsfield West stormed out of the loser's bracket in its climactic run through the tournament. "I didn't think I would strike out that many because North Adams is a good hitting team."

Last night, however, Harrington, who coaches say has been clocked at speeds up to 87 miles per hour, plowed through North Adams' lineup by retiring 15 of the last 16 batters before a modest crowd of about 300 onlookers who lined the field along the outfield fence and the first and third baselines.

Following the game, Pittsfield West coach Michael Cullen likened his hurler's performance to that of another fireballer, only on a much different level.

"Danny goes to the mound like Roger Clemens did for the Red Sox," said Cullen, "and you only need one or two runs to win it because it's all you need with your ace."

And from the start North Adams fell



Dan Harrington, middle, accepted the congratulations of teammates yesterday following Pittsfield West's 3-0 win over North Adams. Harrington allowed two hits and struck out 12.

WEST, continued on C3

Lakefront jewel polished

Burbank Park upgrade nears completion, with other plans in the wings

Spring — with help from a \$1 million refurbishment — seems to have brought new life to Burbank Park.

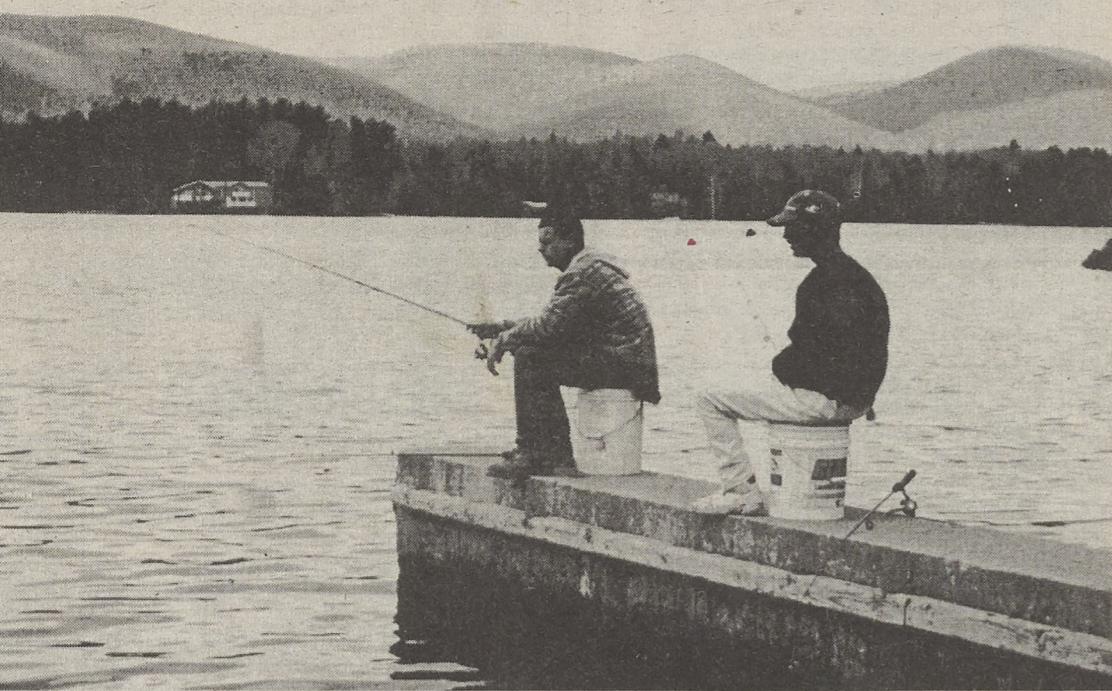
Once barely passable roadways have been repaved. The often-mud-filled parking areas are now paved and clean. The previously rustic Onota Lake beach area now looks more inviting.

In fact, nearly every corner of the expansive park has received attention.

"I think Burbank Park is not only one of the most beautiful spots in Berkshire County but all of Western Massachusetts," says parks commission chairman Cliff Nilan. "That park is going to be really, really wonderful if it lives up to what we envisioned."

The project has been in the works for several years. With rundown beaches, eroding banks and overgrown walkways, the park — once a recreational area for thousands of Berkshire County families — had become somewhat of an embarrassment to city officials.

See BURBANK page 13



When people venture to Burbank Park this spring, they will find that things have changed over the winter. The park is in the midst of a nearly \$1 million renewal which should be complete by Memorial Day. Enhancements include newly paved roads, landscaping and improved beaches. More changes could also be in the works for the Onota Lake area, but so could an initiation of entrance fees. Dave Gary and John Rheaume enjoyed some fishing at the lake on Wednesday.

7/29/99

Burbank Park upgrades set stage for possible second phase

continued from page 1

With support from the administrations of both former Mayor Edward Reilly and current Mayor Gerald Doyle Jr., community services director Bob Mellace pieced together a funding package — tapping state, federal and city money — to move the project forward.

Beginning last fall, construction workers moved in on the park. In addition to the repaved roadways and new parking lots, the refurbishment, designed by Okerstrom-Lang of Great Barrington, includes:

- New railing for the fishing pier at the park's south end, with specially designed handicapped stations to accommodate fishing from wheelchair chairs
- An extended boat launch, designed to prevent erosion caused by propeller clearing from incoming boats
- Construction of a paved walkway connecting the two beach areas. The lakeside walkway includes sitting areas with benches

- A "terraced" north beach area with a larger grass area on one level and a sandy beach on a lower level. The multi-level approach provides leveler sun-bathing areas
- Improved drainage throughout the park, with a goal of diverting runoff away from the lake and improving water quality

In addition, minor landscaping work has brought a cleaner appearance — while not extensively altering the natural beauty, Mellace stressed. The foundation from an old bath house which had burned to the ground was removed as part of the project.

As of this week, crews from D.R. Billings Construction of Lanesboro were completing work on the walkway. Over the next several weeks, they will finish the paving work, line painting and landscaping.

Mellace also praised the efforts of city parks employees and Americorps workers as invaluable to the project.

Start of summer

"If everything goes according to plan, it should be ready by Memorial Day (May 31)," Mellace said.

The community services director hopes that people will revisit Burbank. "I think once people see how much work has been done, how much more attractive it is, they'll want to use it," he said. "I have a feeling people are going to be surprised at how good this park looks now."

While the improvements are worth celebrating, Mellace said, a fair amount of work remains undone. Parks commissioners, in fact, panned the original project extensively because of budget constraints.

"We knew going into this that we didn't have the funding to do everything that needed to be done there,"

Mellace said. "We don't plan to walk away from this now."

The next phase will likely include construction of an additional restroom, removal of the old pumping station building and a redesigned park entrance. Other possibilities include rebuilding the Controy Pavilion located at the park's northern tip, and also improving the large grassy area also on the north end.

A continuation of park improvements has the backing of ward 7 city councilor Joe Guzzo. "This is just the first phase," Guzzo said. "I'm going to be an advocate for a quick start of phase II."

Guzzo believes that the refurbished park will provide a "cleaner, safer" and more enjoyable recreational site.

"Ultimately, I just hope it brings more people to use the facility," he said.

The ward 7 councilor suggested that the parks commission overreached in its early design — and was later forced to make cuts. The commission, for example, spent too much time trying to design a showpiece pavilion, he said, while they should have been focusing on infrastructure improvements.

He encouraged the commission to "stick to basics" in the future and make incremental improvements.

Guzzo has suggested that the park should feature campsites, to further expand its use.

Ward 5 city councilor Rick Scapin, who was a member of the parks commission while the project was being designed, said that he is not disappointed in the scope of the project.

"I would have liked to have seen a total refurbishment but it's good to get the facade in place," he said. "I think it was really important to get these general things done."

Scapin voiced confidence that more work is in the cards for Burbank. "I think there's a lot of enthusiasm, everybody's behind this project," he said. "Even though money is tight, I really see Burbank developing."

Entrance fees

Many local families, Scapin said, have pleasant memories of picnicking at Burbank. "Over the years, it went down hill," he said. "We're bringing it back to where it was 20 years ago. It's exciting — it's hard to believe that improvements are finally starting to happen. Instead of

just talking, we're doing."

In order to protect the \$1 million investment, as well as to fund further improvements, many officials believe that some type of entrance or user fee should be initiated at Burbank.

Parks commission chairman Nilan

calls a fee "inevitable."

Scapin agreed that fees will eventually be initiated. A fee schedule could include separate charges for residents and non-residents. If park usage increases, and opportunities for camping and other activities are added, "that park could be self-sufficient" in terms of funding and maintenance, Scapin said.

"I support user fees," Guzzo said. "We have an awful lot of people that come over here from New York State to boat and to fish at Onota Lake."

Bids being sought for concession stand

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks and Recreation, in conjunction with the purchasing agent, is seeking bids for the summer concession stand operation at the newly refurbished Burbank Park on Onota Lake.

Larger crowds are anticipated at the park and the plan is for the concession to be open from June 26 through Labor Day. Specific information regarding concession requirements can be obtained by picking up a copy of the Invitation for Bid at the purchasing office or by calling the Parks Department at 499-8343.

Bids are due in the purchasing office by 2 on Thursday.

6/16/99

Fees likely for parking at Onota next year

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — For decades, use of the Pittsfield park system has been free.

But that's likely to change next year after the Park Commission agreed to develop a fee system for the newly renovated Burbank Park at its monthly meeting Monday night.

Robert Mellace, director of community services, said the fee system could provide the city with a dedicated fund to help maintain Burbank Park, the popular city parcel along the east shore of Onota Lake.

"If you're going to charge a fee, you can't have people going in the woods," he advised them.

Outgoing Chairman Clifford Nilan cautioned his fellow commissioners not to rush into things. He suggested they develop a plan over the fall and winter so it was ready for implementation next spring.

"I think we need some time to let people adjust to the idea and time for us to think things through and come up with a good strong plan," he said.

Mellace stressed his idea is for a vehicle fee, not a user fee. Commissioners unanimously felt entrance to the park should remain free to people who walk or bicycle there. And it should be affordable for Pittsfield residents, they added.

Suggestions ranged from a stepped annual parking fee for local, county, and out-of-state vehicles to launch fees for boats.

Mellace said he envisioned an annual vehicle fee or parking fee of \$7.50 for Pittsfielders, \$15 for Massachusetts residents and \$20 for out-of-staters, or a day pass that would cost \$2 for state residents and \$4 for nonresidents.

Commissioner James Conant has pushed hard for a fee system, which he said would not only raise revenue, but by necessity improve security at the park.

He said the recent history of the park ran in cycles of "improvements" followed by decline. A fee system would provide money for park maintenance. It would also require a staffed gatehouse to collect fees.

FEES, continued on B4

Fees from Bl 6/9/99

"We need to put a gate and some kind of structure there," he said. "We spent an awful lot of money up there."

Commissioner Robert Smith agreed that a fee "wasn't out of line." He suggested a \$5 annual sticker for local seniors, \$10 for Pittsfielders and \$15 for county residents. "I don't think \$10 is going to set a lot of people back," he said.

Ward 7 Councilor Joseph O. Guzzo, who is a member of the Lake Onota Preservation Association, said he has long been a proponent of park fees.

But, he said, if the commission intends to adopt a fee, it needs to first install restroom facilities in the south parking lot near the public boat ramp.

"If you're going to charge a fee, you can't have people going in the woods," he advised them.

Outgoing Chairman Clifford Nilan cautioned his fellow commissioners not to rush into things. He suggested they develop a plan over the fall and winter so it was ready for implementation next spring.

"I think we need some time to let people adjust to the idea and time for us to think things through and come up with a good strong plan," he said.

"The public is accustomed to paying taxes and having use of the parks for no fee their entire lives," he added. "I don't think the public would be opposed to a fee; we just have to do it right."

But later Nilan balked when Conant suggested the commission also consider charging groups \$20 per event for the use of athletic fields. Neighboring towns like Dalton assess a fee for park events, Conant noted.

"You've got a long way to go to convince me we should start charging for the use of our parks," said Nilan.

Other business

The commission also approved:

► A request by the Berkshire Sand Volleyball League to install three sand volleyball courts in Marchisio's Park on Dalton Division Road.

► A request by the local chapter of Trout Unlimited to install a small dam and channel constrictor to improve trout habitat in Sackett Brook where it runs through Kirvin Park on West Street.

In a final piece of business, the commission unanimously voted to have local attorney Anthony G. Massimiano succeed Nilan as commission chairman.

Second herbicide application set for Onota Lake this week

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — A Sutton lake management contractor is set to apply a second dose of herbicide to control Eurasian milfoil at Onota Lake.

Robert Mellace, the city's director of community services, said that lake experts from Aquatic Control Technologies will be returning to the 617-acre raised great pond tomorrow for a supplemental application of the herbicide Sonar.

During the first application on June 1, city officials closed the lake in order to give the company's boats room to work. The chemical carries no federal Environmental Protection Agency or state restrictions for boating, fishing or swimming. Still, Mellace advised recreational users to steer clear of the boats tomorrow to allow the Sonar to be diluted and dispersed in the water.

"They said they were very pleased with the results," Mellace said. "They found an incredible uniformity in concentration given the size and variation of the lake bottom."

The chemical was initially

applied at a rate of 10 parts per billion in the 200-acre north basin and at 6 ppb in the 400 acre south basin, Mellace said. Residual concentrations ranged from 5.55 ppb to 6.6 ppb in all but one of the seven sampling stations.

Water samples are collected just before dawn when dissolved oxygen levels are at their lowest.

Denied permission to perform a

6/16/99

The Pittsfield Gazette June 10, 1999

Commissioners support concept of Burbank Park fees

A walk in the park would still be free, but taking a carload of kids to the Onota Lake beach, launching a boat at the public boat ramp or enjoying a picnic at Burbank Park would come with a price tag, under a plan being developed by the city's park commission.

The commission, which has long hinted that Burbank Park user fees are inevitable, appears poised to establish a fee system which could be in effect as early as next year.

The board discussed the topic during a Monday meeting, with all members voicing support. "We really need to move on this," said commissioner James Conant.

City community services director Robert Mellace favors fees. The board has been reluctant to take the step in the past, Mellace explained, since Burbank Park had been in such shabby condition. But in the wake of a just completed \$1 million refurbishment, user fees are warranted, and indeed are needed to protect the investment, Mellace said.

The community services director

going to set somebody back," he said. Commissioner Sue Colker said that she would like to see the fees in place for this summer's season. "I'd hate to see this go to next year," she said.

But Mellace said that establishing a fee system immediately would be "very difficult."

Not only do the fees have to be set, but a collection system must be designed as well. A booth would likely be built at the Burbank Park entrance, additional staff may be needed to collect the fees, Mellace said. In addition, park security would have to be substantially increased.

Commission chairman Cliff Nilan agreed that moving forward methodically was the best course. "I think that we have to get a good project in place before we implement it," he said. "I'm in favor of a fee system but I think we need to do it right. I think we need to give it some thought and see what it is all about."

Smith suggested that most Pittsfield residents would be willing to pay as much as \$10 for a season's pass to Burbank. "I don't think that \$10 for a whole summer is really

I think we've got to educate the public first."

City councilor Joe Guzzo said that he has "been a proponent of fees for years now." One key component, Guzzo warned, would be that a "revolving" account be established to ensure that the money would stay under parks department purview. Without a revolving account, money raised at the park would simply go into the city's general fund and could be spent elsewhere.

Another key, Guzzo added, is to assure that people are getting their money's worth. In addition to improved security, a restroom should be built on the park's south end, near the boat ramp.

"If you're going to be charging fees, you can't have people going in the woods," Guzzo said.

The ward 7 councilor added that the city should aggressively move

forward with "phase II," an additional round of Burbank Park improvements.

Nilan agreed that the revolving account is crucial. "It's a beautiful park," he said. "It should be kept up."

The recent park improvement included repaving of access roads and parking lots; remodeling of beaches; improved handicapped accessibility; landscaping; improvements to the boat launch and improved walkways.

The city earlier this month also

began a chemical assault on the milfoil weed which has been choking the lake in recent years, endangering swimmers and clogging boat propellers.

The park commission took no action on the user fees on Monday but will now begin the process of formalizing a plan.

Dowd wants dollars for lake pavilion

Paul Dowd called on colleagues Tuesday to prioritize an upgrade of the Controy Pavilion at Onota Lake.

Dowd is requesting a \$20,000 appropriation for new electrical wiring, windows and walls at the site, which is often used for charity events.

"It's obsolete now, it needs to be upgraded," said the at-large councilor.

"There's a lot of people who get a lot of use out of that ... we need to implement some money."

The petition was referred to the mayor and the conservation commission, which oversees the pavilion.

7/15/99

A walk in the park

The Pittsfield Gazette July 15, 1999
The Pittsfield Gazette
PO Box 2236
Pittsfield, Mass 01202-2236
ourgazette@aol.com

OPINIONS



City to seek grant for Onota Lake

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Even as the city gets ready to tackle the mats of Eurasian milfoil infesting Onota Lake later this month by applying a chemical herbicide, officials are hoping to win \$167,000 in federal funding to make sure more herbicide treatments aren't needed in the future.

The money, available under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, helps communities reduce polluted runoff into water bodies through the construction of improvements such as drainage systems and through educational programs.

"We want the public to understand we're not just relying on the chemical," said Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, which includes the parks. "We have a more comprehensive lake management plan. There's no easy solution, no one simple answer for the problem. And we're addressing things one issue at a time."

The next step will be a lakewide application of the herbicide Sonar, a chemical that forces plants to expel their food-producing chlorophyll, causing them to starve. Sonar is favored because it acts on milfoil in low concentrations while sparing beneficial native plants. It also works slowly so the weeds don't die all at once, thereby sucking all the oxygen out of the water. And it doesn't accumulate in fish.

The city hopes the treatment later this month will reduce the weed mass by 90 percent.

The long-range strategy involves reducing the amount of weed-promoting nutrients flowing into the lake water and perhaps introducing a milfoil-eating wee-

'We want the public to understand we're not just relying on the chemical,' Mellace said. 'We have a more comprehensive lake management plan.'

vil to establish a biological control mechanism.

The city previously installed a sewer line along Blythewood Drive to prevent sewage from infiltrating the lake.

A main focus of the long-range plan is the construction of a culvert under Thomas Island Road to give nutrient-rich water entering the north basin a shortcut to the dam spillway and a quick exit from the lake. Currently, water must flow around the south end of Thomas Island, giving nutrients ample time to settle and fertilize another year's weed growth.

The culvert project would be a prime beneficiary of the Section 319 grant that Amy Pfeifer, an environmental planner with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, applied for on behalf of the city and the Lake Onota Protective Association.

Pfeifer explained that the grant program, administered by the state Department of Environmental Protection, requires a 40 percent match, which can include in-kind services. Together



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Eurasian milfoil in Onota Lake causes problems for swimmers and boaters.

the city, the Lake Onota association and the planning commission have come up with \$116,900 in matching funds and services; most of that, Pfeifer said, comes from money the city has set aside to help pay for the installation of the culvert.

That puts the total project cost at \$283,900.

The in-kind contribution would also include establishing a volunteer water quality monitoring project, implementing erosion control measures at the city's Burbank Park to further reduce nutrient inflow, conducting educational work-

shops on indirect pollution and developing informational brochures on the subject.

If the Sonar treatment works as advertised, then the city wouldn't have to pay for weed harvesting, which typically costs \$25,000 a year. That money might be targeted to weevil introduction.

Typically, the DEP announces grant recipients in July, she said.

Meanwhile, the city is still negotiating with Aquatic Control Technology Inc. on

ONOTA, continued on B4

The Pittsfield Gazette February 25, 1999

Commissioners will seek mayor's input on Pontoosuc restroom site

The city has set aside some \$80,000 to build a restroom at Pontoosuc Lake. The question is where to put it.

The park commission on Monday, while agreeing that a bath house should be built this year, debated its placement. Community services director Bob Mellace said that most lake patrons use the Hancock Road picnic and boating area rather than the "muscle beach" site off North

Street, so it would make sense to locate the restroom off Hancock Road.

Mellace presented options for the Hancock Road site, including near the current inoperational bath house, which is located at the swimming area; and in the parking lot near the boat ramp.

The site of the old bath house did not win good reviews since the beach has seriously eroded in recent years and is little used. The site near the boat ramp would be easier for more people, commissioners agreed. But they also worried that locating the bathroom there would encourage

swimming in the boat channel.

Board member Robert Smith said

that there currently is no ideal site.

Smith said that he would like to see a bath house built for as little expense

as possible and then use whatever

money is left over to refurbish the beach.

Following an extensive debate

during Monday's meeting, the board

decided not to vote on the matter.

Instead, members will meet with

Mayor Gerald Doyle, Jr. and other

city officials to receive input.

The board will likely vote on the matter

at its mid-March meeting, said chair-

man Cliff Nilan.

► PITTSFIELD: The Department of Parks and Recreation has announced that the boat ramp/fishing pier parking lot at Burbank Park on Onota Lake will be closed this Monday for final paving.

5/15/99

Culinary teens suggested for beach concession

After several summers during which no one has bid to operate a food concession at Burbank Park, Jamie Williamson wants to turn the project over to high school culinary students.

The at-large councilor proposed having Pittsfield High School students run the concession, with ward 7 councilor Joe Guzzo saying any plan should also involve Taconic High School students.

In her petition, Williamson stated "this would allow the students to not only use their culinary skills, but will give them an opportunity to experience the entrepreneurial side of the process."

The proposal was referred to the parks commission and school committee.

7/15/99
Additional council news appears on page 9

Sidewalk cafes win council approval

By Kelly O'Callaghan
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Sidewalk cafes may become a familiar sight now that the City Council has approved an ordinance allowing outdoor dining accommodations downtown.

The new ordinance allows established businesses in the downtown revitalization district to extend their services beyond the confines of their walls and hopefully attract more customers, especially during the summer tourist season.

Each permit application must be signed by the police chief, the Community Development Board and the Licensing Board, according to the new ordinance. Permits will be issued yearly, at an annual fee of \$300. That fee will be waived for establishments that have held a liquor license since June 30, 1998.

Additional permission is needed to serve alcohol on a sidewalk cafe, and all sidewalk cafes must close for the night no later than 11, the ordinance reads.

Grant for bathhouse

In other business, a \$7,750 environmental grant from Wal-Mart will help the city pay for infrastructure and other necessities at the proposed Pontoosuc Lake bathhouse. Wal-Mart representatives formally presented a check to the council Tuesday night.

Barry Architects recently submitted plans for a new bathhouse to the Parks Commission, with the entire project estimated to cost \$80,000. The \$7,750 grant

CAFES, continued on B4

Saturday, May 22, 1999

Efforts to rescue city lake under way

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The city has begun trying to lower Onota Lake to the level of the dam spillway in anticipation of a June 1 application of an herbicide designed to control Asian milfoil on the 617-acre body of water.

Robert Mellace, director of community services, which includes Parks and Recreation, said yesterday the lake lowering had begun a week earlier, after expiration of the appeal period for the Conservation Commission's order of conditions.

Mellace said the rejection of a more extensive drawdown had backed off \$14,610 onto the cost of the project because of the need to apply more of the herbicide Sonar to ensure 90 percent control of the weed problem.

Sonar is a slow-acting systemic herbicide that kills milfoil by forcing it to expel its chlorophyll, starving the plant. It is favored over quick-acting contact herbicides because the weeds die over a period of several weeks, reducing the likelihood that oxygen levels will crash.

The amendment to the contract will bring the project to \$125,000, which includes \$10,000 for the management plan.

But Mellace said the city will not have to appropriate more money to fund the project.

The contractor, Aquatic Control Technologies (ACT), submitted a winning bid of \$105,930, but the City Council added \$10,000 as a contingency when it appropriated the money for the project. Another \$10,000 will cover the management plan.

ONOTA, continued on B6

Onota from B1

ment plan drawn up by ACT and submitted in support of the notice of intent the city filed with the Conservation Commission.

"The bottom line is the contractor and his supplier worked with us, realizing we had a budget limitation," Mellace said. "We're all in this together. Everybody wants this to work."

The Sonar application is the first step in a long-term plan to control weeds in the lake. High nutrient loads provides ample food for the weeds, so eliminating nutrient inputs, or channelling nutrient water out of the lake before the nutrients settle out, is a goal of the plan. To that end, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has applied for a \$167,000 Clean Water Act grant to build a culvert under Thomas Island Road to channel nutrient-rich water out of the North Basin and directly over the dam instead of letting the water flow out over the lake.

A decision is expected in July. The contract specifies that ACT must achieve 90 percent control of the milfoil if it is to receive full payment. The company will receive \$84,744 after the initial application in June. If Sonar obtains 90 percent control, then ACT will receive the remaining balance of \$21,186 at the end of the summer.

However, if ACT is only able to achieve between 80 and 90 percent

control, the company will receive 50 percent of the balance. If the control falls below 80 percent, none of the balance will be paid.

ACT and representatives from the Lake Onota Protective Association will be performing vegetative transects to establish baseline conditions from which to judge the company's performance.

In year two of the three-year contract, ACT has asked for permission to apply contact herbicides in small areas, if needed, to keep the milfoil down. However,

the next thing for Mellace to worry about is the level of the lake itself. ACT President Gerald Smith has said that to get best

5/22/99

City beach, parks open on Monday

PITTSFIELD — The Department of Parks and Recreation has announced that the public beach, Onota Lake at Burbank Park and the summer playground program, will open this Monday.

The lifeguards will be on the beach from 10 to 6, seven days per week, for eight weeks. The playgrounds, the Common, Pitt Park, Clapp, and Deming will be staffed Monday through Friday from 9 to noon, and 1 to 5, for six weeks.

Park security will also be on duty at Onota Lake, Burbank Park.

6/25/99

Police to patrol at Onota Lake

By Tony Dobrowolski
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Pittsfield Police will be sending officers to patrol Burbank Park on Onota Lake next week, in response to recent criminal activity there.

Capt. Patrick F. Barry, acting commander of the detective bureau, said police patrols will consist of both uniformed officers and plainclothes detectives.

Barry said recent larcenies and an alleged indecent assault and battery at Burbank Park prompted police to consider adding patrols to assist park security. The police patrols also will cover a footpath that runs from Hillcrest Hospital property to Burbank Park's fishing pier.

"It's been an off-and-on problem for several years," Barry said of the footpath.

According to Eagle files, Pittsfield Police have had patrols before in Burbank Park because there of a history of sex offenses there. In April 1996, Pittsfield Police arrested a Williamstown man on a charge of indecent exposure in the park.

7/31/99

Onota Lake drawdown set to begin

PITTSFIELD — The Onota Lake drawdown will begin on Friday, Oct. 15.

According to the city's Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission, the lake will be drawn down no more than 1 foot below the spillway by Nov. 1. From this date, the drawdown will continue until the lake is approximately 3 feet below the spillway elevation. It is anticipated that this elevation will be reached by mid-November, weather permitting. The lake will remain at this elevation throughout the winter months, with refill beginning around March 15, 2000. According to the order, the lake must then be refilled by April 15, 2000.

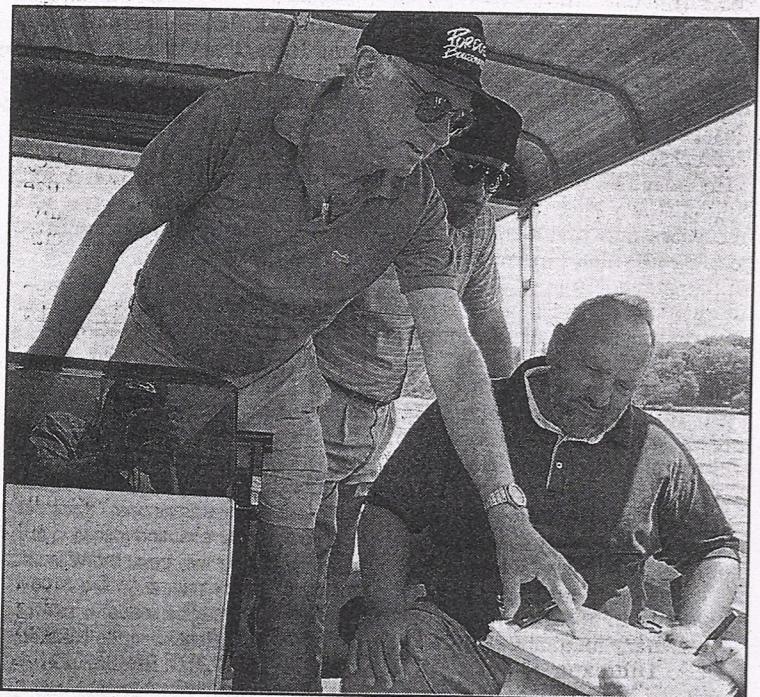
Any questions regarding the drawdown should be directed to the Parks Department at 499-9343.

10/18/99

PITTSFIELD: The Department

of Parks and Recreation will be removing the dock at the Pontoosuc Lake boat ramp, off Hancock Road, by Thursday. Anyone needing to use the dock to remove their boat from the lake is advised to do so prior to this date. Questions should be directed to the Parks Department at 499-9343. 10/18/99

Technicians launch attack on weeds in Onota Lake



Monitoring the Sonar application are, from left, Robert Race of the Onota Lake group, Director of Community Services Robert Mellace and Ward 7 City councilor Joseph Guzzo.

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Technicians from a Sutton-based lake management company spread a slow-acting herbicide on Onota Lake yesterday in an effort to knock down hundreds of acres of Eurasian milfoil, a weed that has choked the lake in recent years.

The application of the herbicide Sonar is part of the city's long-term strategy to restore the 617-acre lake's clear waters. Yesterday, certified herbicide applicators from Aquatic Control Technologies piloted two small boats back and forth across the broad lake, each equipped with outriggers trailing hoses from which the diluted liquid chemical was dispensed.

A first step

City officials, including Ward 7 Councilor Joseph O. Guzzo, said the application was only a first step in "getting our hands around" the weed problem at the lake, which has made boating



Certified herbicide applicators from Aquatic Control Technologies pilot a boat equipped with outriggers trailing hoses from which the diluted liquid chemical was dispensed.

problematic and swimming unpleasant in medium depths of between 3 and 15 feet.

"This isn't a silver bullet," said Robert Race, president of the Lake Onota Preservation Association, which has formed partnerships with the city on several lake issues.

The last five years have seen "explosive" growth of the milfoil and curly pondweed, another introduced pest species, said

Race, who has lived on Thomas Island for 35 years.

"I'm a strong swimmer," he said. "I admit that I don't want to swim in it. It does cling and it's fairly strong."

Signs posted

Signs posted around the lake yesterday informed swimmers, boaters and fishermen that the lake was closed to allow the applicators freedom to work, not because of concerns about expo-

sure to Sonar, Race noted.

Aquatic Control Technologies employees piloted two boats, one a small outboard and the other an air boat similar to those commonly used in the Everglades. After dividing the lake into quadrants, they passed back and forth at 75-foot intervals, leaving a barely visible double trail of milky water in their wake.

They'll return in a week to ana-

ONOTA, continued on B4

Input will be sought prior to any Burbank Park fees

The park commission will hold a public hearing before initiating parking or other user fees at Burbank Park, board members said this past Monday.

The commission was responding to a petition from county treasurer Peter Arlos, who spoke out against the concept of fees. "I'm adamantly opposed to that," he said. "I think it's arrogant of city officials to say they have to protect the park. Protect it from who? The taxpayers?"

The park commission has begun considering a fee schedule which would initially affect only Burbank Park. Although no plan has been proposed yet, members have in the past discussed charging entrance fees for automobiles and boat launching fees.

Season passes would likely be available and different rates would be charged for local residents and out-of-towners.

Several park commissioners have said that in the wake of a \$1 million refurbishment of the park, which borders Onota Lake, a revenue stream is needed to maintain the site.

Arlos argues that the park's main users are poor families and seniors, who do not have swimming pools and other recreational options. "The people that use [Burbank Park] are on the low end of the economic scale," he said.

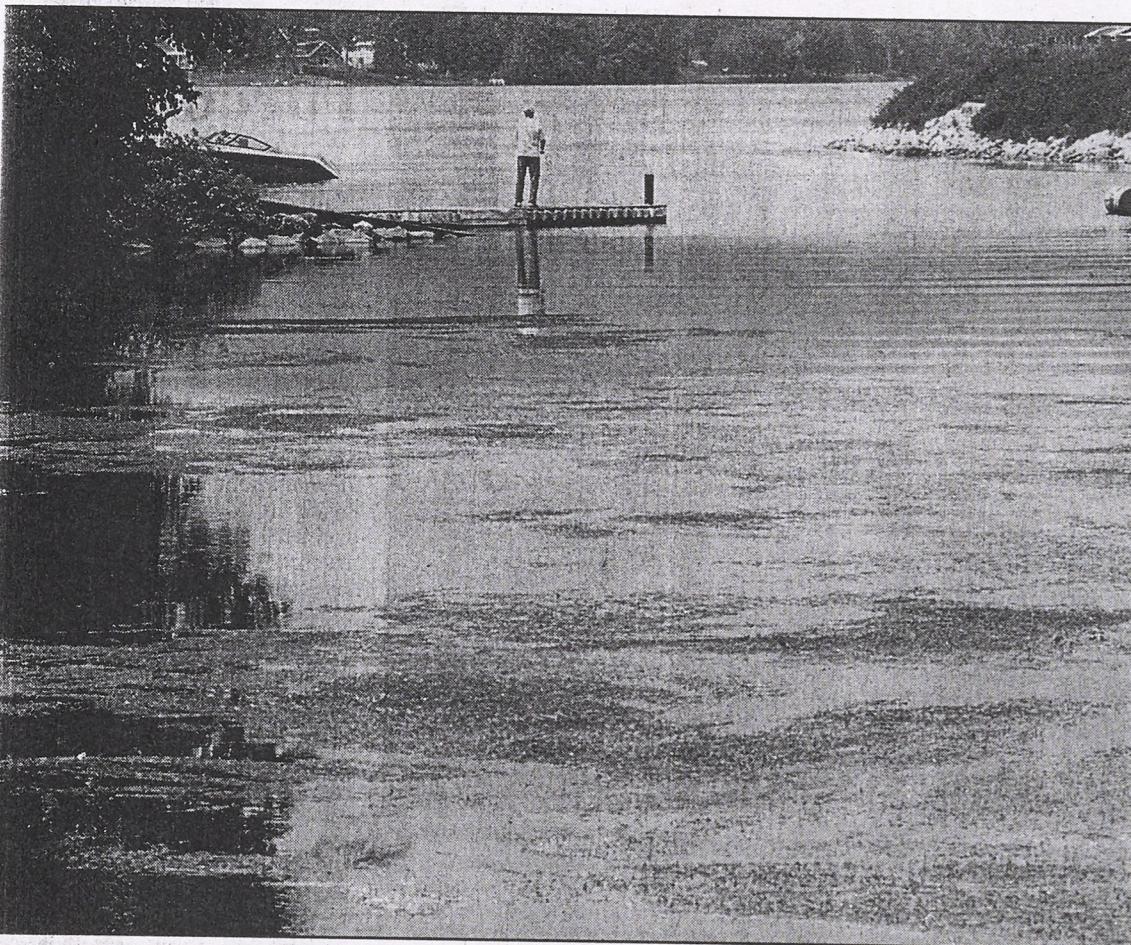
Commission chairman Anthony Massimiano assured Arlos that a public hearing had always been considered part of the process. "We certainly would have a public hearing," he said.

Although the commission has begun developing a fee schedule proposal, no time line for initiating the fees has been set and a public hearing has not yet been scheduled.

7/21/99

Wednesday, June 2, 1999

The Berkshires



ture already visible on the surface of Pontoosuc Lake. Onota Lake could be expected to look the same yesterday's application of Sonar, a slow-acting herbicide.

Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Onota from B1

lyze water samples to make sure the Sonar concentrations are adequate to knock off the milfoil. The initial application had a target of 12 parts per billion. Aquatic Control Technologies hopes to maintain between 4 and 5 ppb in order to knock the milfoil back. Those levels should not hurt native aquatic vegetation, which will grow up later in the summer.

The order of conditions issued by the Conservation Commission also requires Aquatic Control Technologies to measure levels of dissolved oxygen, which are critical for maintaining the lake's fishery.

Sonar works by causing the plants to expel their chlorophyll, after which they essentially starve. The process takes about a month.

Three major projects

Community Services Director Robert S. Mellace pointed out that the weed treatment was one of three major ongoing projects at the lake.

This July, the city expects to hear whether it has won a \$187,000 grant from the federal Clean Water Act program. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission applied for the grant on the city's behalf to fund the installation of two box culverts under Thomas Island Road that would help channel nutrient-rich water over the dam spillway. Now the water flows out into the broad, shallow North Basin and the rest of the lake, where it has fueled the milfoil's expansion.

The city is also preparing to commemorate the reopening of the renovated Burbank Park in July. The project includes improvements to a popular swimming area that was weed-free five years ago. Now, it's as bad as other areas.

"The Sonar treatment really complements the work of park improvement," said Mellace. "As Joe Guzzo points out rightly, the more we turn toward tourism, the more important the lake becomes."

The milfoil isn't present in the center of the south basin, where water depths greater than 15 feet prevent sunlight from reaching the bottom. But all along the lake's shore and in the entire 200-acre north basin, the weed has flourished.

Race and Guzzo cruised the lake two weeks ago, and found that the milfoil had barely started to grow. But after a fortnight of warm weather, the weed was within a foot of breaking the surface in many places, meaning that its growth spurt measured several inches a day during that span.

At nearby Pontoosuc Lake, broad mats of milfoil have already spread across the water along the northern shore. A large floating mat 50 feet wide rafted up against the dam spillway.

"That's just what the boats have churned up," Race said.

Then & Now

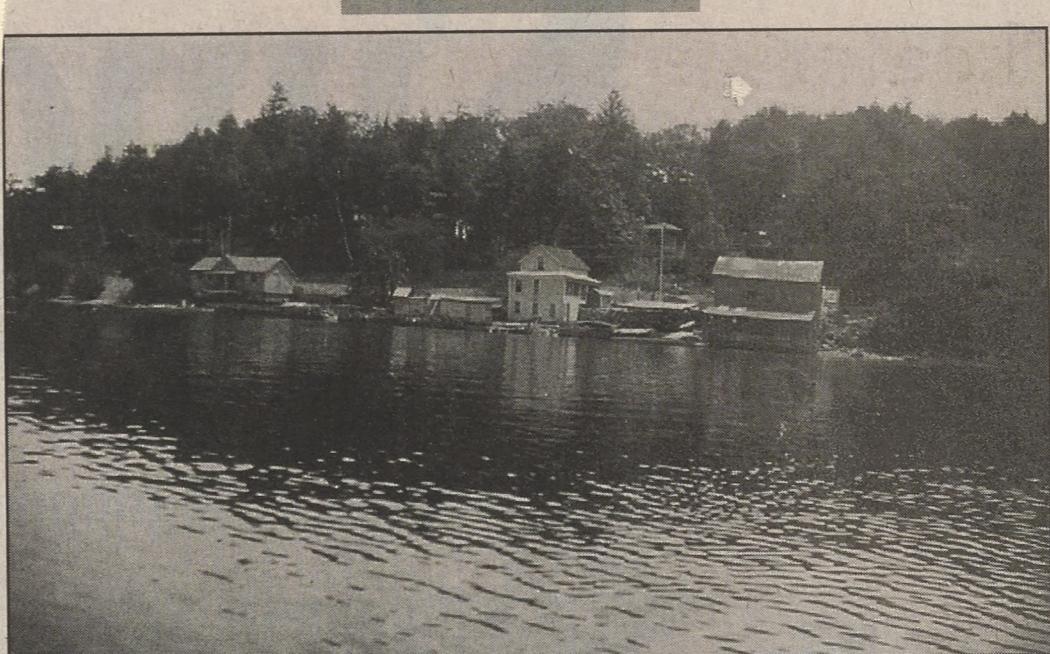
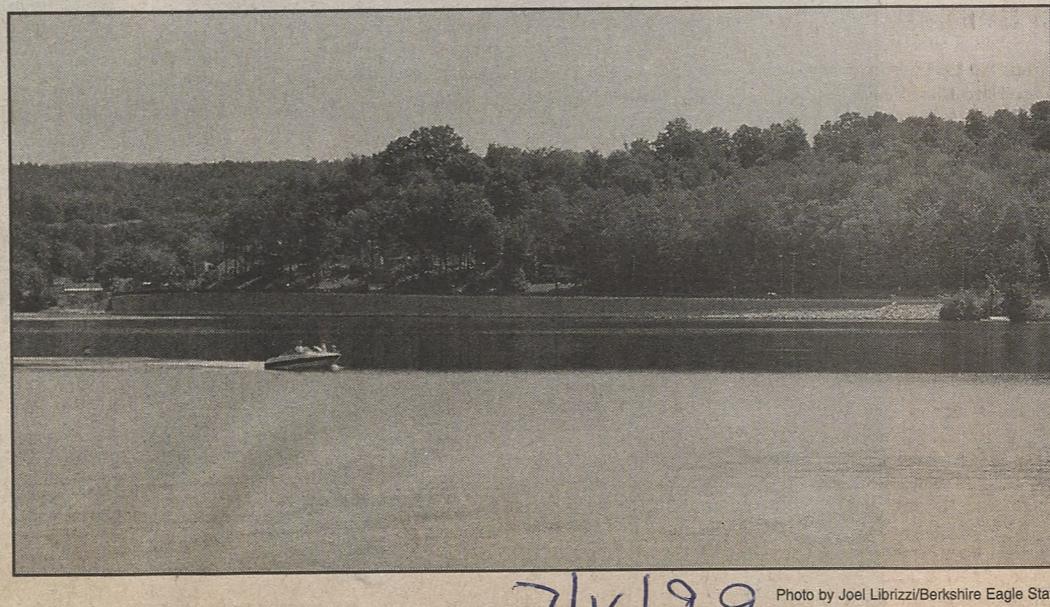


Photo courtesy John Zelazo

John Zelazo of Adams supplied us with this view, above, of the east shore of Pontoosuc Lake in Pittsfield in 1923. The cottage at left, he writes, was once a lake boat and floating casino. The house in center, demolished when Route 7 was widened four years ago, belonged to his grandparents, Archie and Bertha Thomson. It had a general store and boathouse office at lake level. The barn-like building at right, he said, was a gas station with boat storage at lake level. Archie Thomson died in 1926 and his wife sold these properties in 1932, moving her businesses to the south side of the lake, Zelazo said. View of the same site with highway retaining wall is shown today, below.



7/4/99 Photo by Joel Librizzi/Berkshire Eagle Staff

Onota Lake weed treatment slated Tuesday

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — The city Park Department is preparing to post Onota Lake with warning signs in preparation for an herbicide application next Tuesday.

Swimming, boating and fishing will be prohibited on the 617-acre lake the day of application only, said Robert S. Mellace, the director of community services. The public boat ramp in the south parking lot of Burbank Park will be closed Tuesday.

However, Onota Lake water may not be used for irrigation until August.

The application of Sonar, a slow-acting systemic herbicide that kills plants by forcing them to expel their chlorophyll, will be performed by certified applicators from Sutton-based Aquatic Control Technologies in boats.

The target is Eurasian milfoil, which has grown dramatically over the last few years. Thick mats covered about one-

ONOTA, continued on B4

Weedkillers in lakes

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:

As a 12-year-old in our community, I sometimes hear my parents talking about issues that interest me. One such issue is the fact that we are putting a chemical into the local lakes that might be dangerous to humans. Sonar, or fluridone, is being put into our waters to kill the weeds that are choking them. On a material safety data sheet I found on the Internet, it said that Sonar is slightly dangerous on contact, and that "Prolonged exposure may cause slight skin irritation." If swallowed, you should induce vomiting, and for eye contact, you should rinse with plenty of water. Although the hazard rating was a 1 on a scale of 0-5, I still wonder if any risk is worth it.

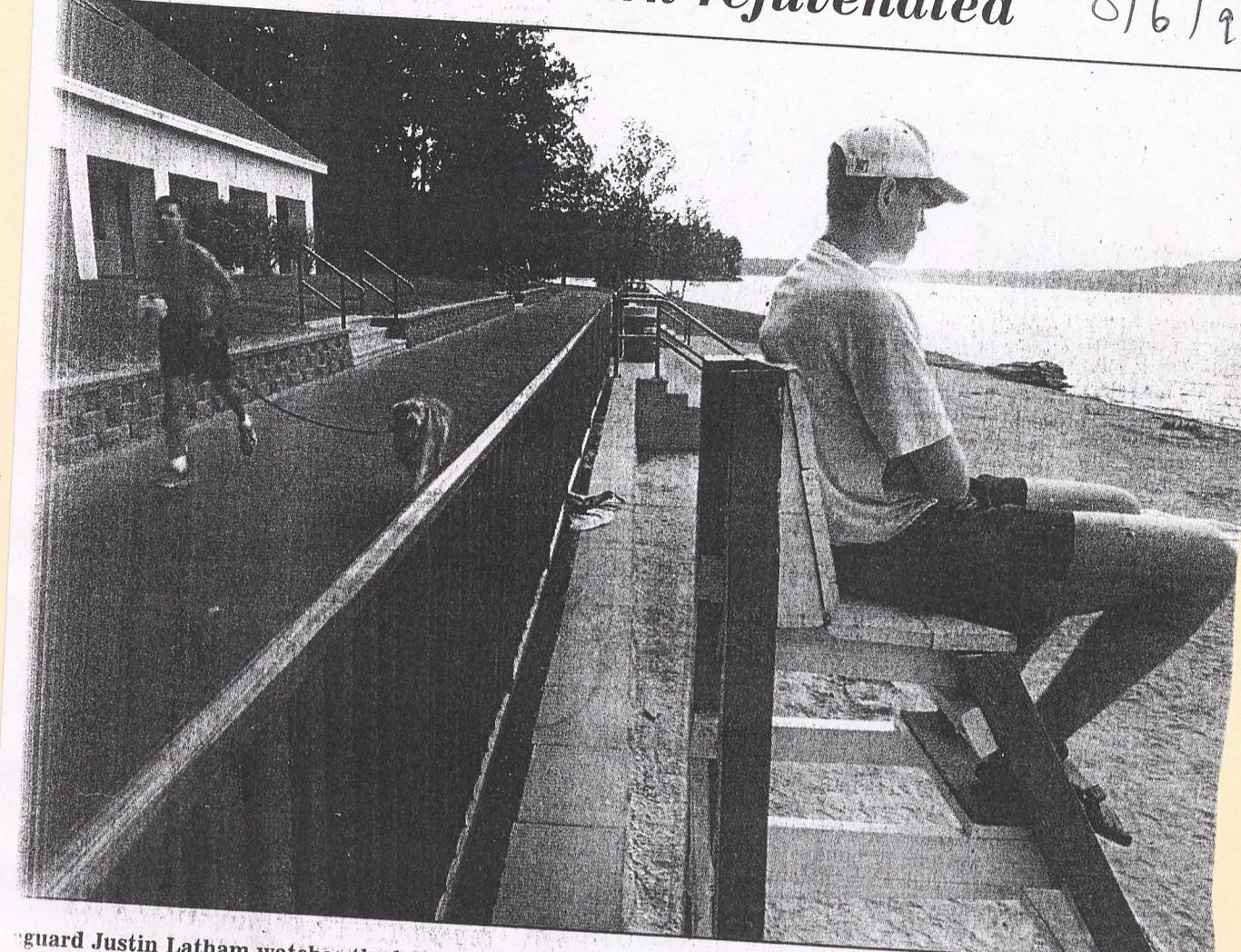
I'd like to see The Eagle write more on this topic and other alternatives like "weed-eating" fish.

ADAM ROSE

Pittsfield, Aug. 16, 1999

Burbank Park rejuvenated

8/6/99



Guard Justin Latham watches the beach at Burbank Park. Contractor D.R. Billings reconstructed the roadway, installed an accessible lakefront walkway and fishing pier, rehabilitated the beach and extended the boat ramp.

Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

City polishes 'hidden jewel'

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — With a bank of fluffy cumulus clouds piled spectacularly over Taconic Range behind Onota Lake, and state officials celebrated the \$1 million renovation of lakeside Burbank yesterday morning, "this is a hidden jewel," said state Sen. Leo P. Nuciforo Jr., D-Pittsfield, as he led to the refurbished Burbank Park house. "How many cities have something like this?"

During the last year, the city's contractor, D.R. Billings of Lanesboro, reconstructed the park's badly deteriorated installed a handicapped-accessible lakefront walkway and fishing pier, facilitated the public north beach, and added the public boat ramp.

As a result is a delightful, spacious park that should make the city proud, Joan Rose, from the state Executive of Environmental Affairs.

No longer do you need an ATV to get into the parking lot. No longer do you have a parking lot mud season.'

"Congratulations to all of you," Rose said. "You've done a marvelous job." "Projects like this create a sense of community," said state Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins, D-Lee. "It's always important to have places where families can come, that are free. I was out here on a boat last Sunday and it was all about families having access to this beautiful body of water surrounded by wonderful mountains."

At one point, Nuciforo tried to inspire

local officials to re-create a notable political stunt.

"I remember a couple of years ago, Governor Weld dove into the Charles River," said the natty attired senator to appreciative chuckles. "I'm expecting to see the same thing from the city today."

"I'll follow you," City Council President Thomas E. Hickey Jr. shot back. "You show me the way."

Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, said the celebration culminated a two-year process that included 18 months of public hearings and required help from the legislative delegation in Boston.

The \$1,015,000 project was accomplished with the help of \$500,000 from the state Department of Conservation Services Urban Self Help grants program, \$220,000 from the state Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Law Enforcement, and \$60,000 from the

PARK, continued on A5

— The Berkshire Eagle, Wednesday, October 27, 1999



Moment for reflection

A visitor to Burbank Park in Pittsfield is dwarfed by the trees reflected in the waters of Onota Lake recently.

Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Park from A1

U.S. Community Development Block Grant program.

The city also invested \$115,000 in a weed control project that involved the application of an herbicide called Sonar. With navy a weed in sight on the 617-acre lake's surface, the application appears to be working as planned, city officials said.

"It's difficult to get people to put their time in like this," said Hickey, who was appearing in place of Mayor Gerald S. Doyle Jr. "This took a lot of time. I don't think the public fully understands that."

Hickey also thanked a long list of people, but singled out Ward 7 Councilor Joseph O. Guzzo.

"I don't think that the City Council part would have happened without you pushing as hard as you did," Hickey said to Guzzo. "There was never once a meeting where you didn't remind us about this project."

Guzzo reminded everyone that parks can either be an asset or a liability. For a number of years, I think, this park has had the stigma of being a liability. Now it's the jewel of the city's park system."

There were plenty of thanks to go around, including warm praise for the state legislative delegation,

which helped deliver the state funding.

The recent renovations constitute Phase I of the park master plan drafted by the city Park Commission during the tenure of former chairman Clifford Nilan.

He was replaced earlier this year by Anthony Massimiano.

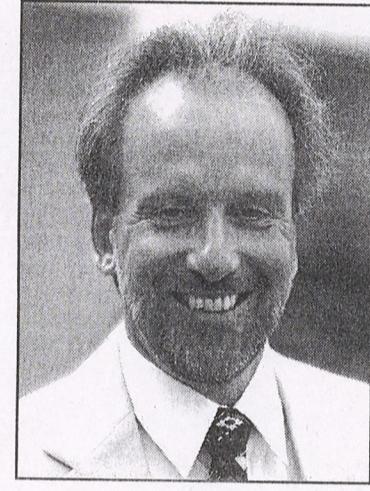
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Robert S. Mellace

edged that he was gratified to see that long hours of work had paid off.

Phase II of the park's development calls for walking trails, cross country ski trails and bathroom facilities near the south parking lot. Phase III would include the restoration of the South Beach, which still gets heavy use, and possibly the creation of camp sites.

"We want to diversify," he said. "We'd also like to encourage winter activities more than we have."

Burbank Park will now join the long list of natural attractions that are helping to make tourism the county's No. 1 industry," said William Wilson, president of the Berkshire Visitors Bureau.

"Our research shows that the reason the Berkshires is such a fast-growing tourist destination is the combination of world class culture and incredible scenery," he said. "And this is some of the most beautiful scenery in the country."

"This place is why visitors come here and spend \$250 million a year."

8/6/99

Onota from A1

whole-lake treatment using the herbicide in the Northeast.

Mellace said that comments from lake users have all been positive.

"They all say, 'Geez, the lake is so much better,'" he said. "But we're looking at it more from a contractual standpoint. When they hit that 90 percent mark, that's when we'll be totally satisfied."

The contract specifies that Aquatic Control Technologies must demonstrate a 90 percent reduction in the amount of milfoil, which only last year infested 30 percent to 40 percent of the lake's area.

Mellace added that officials from the company and Sonar's distributor recently toured the lake and said the herbicide was acting as expected.

"Milfoil is a very tolerant species," he said. "Even as it's dying, it keeps sending out little shoots, trying to hang on."

A rake was used to fish the dying strands of milfoil from the lake to monitor its progress during the inspection.

8/12/99

ONOTA, continued on A7

"When you raise it up, it's tufted right at the top," Mellace said. "It looks like a long strand of spaghetti with no leaves on it."

"They said that even if milfoil continues to stand through the fall, they believe it will not revive by spring."

Vegetation survey

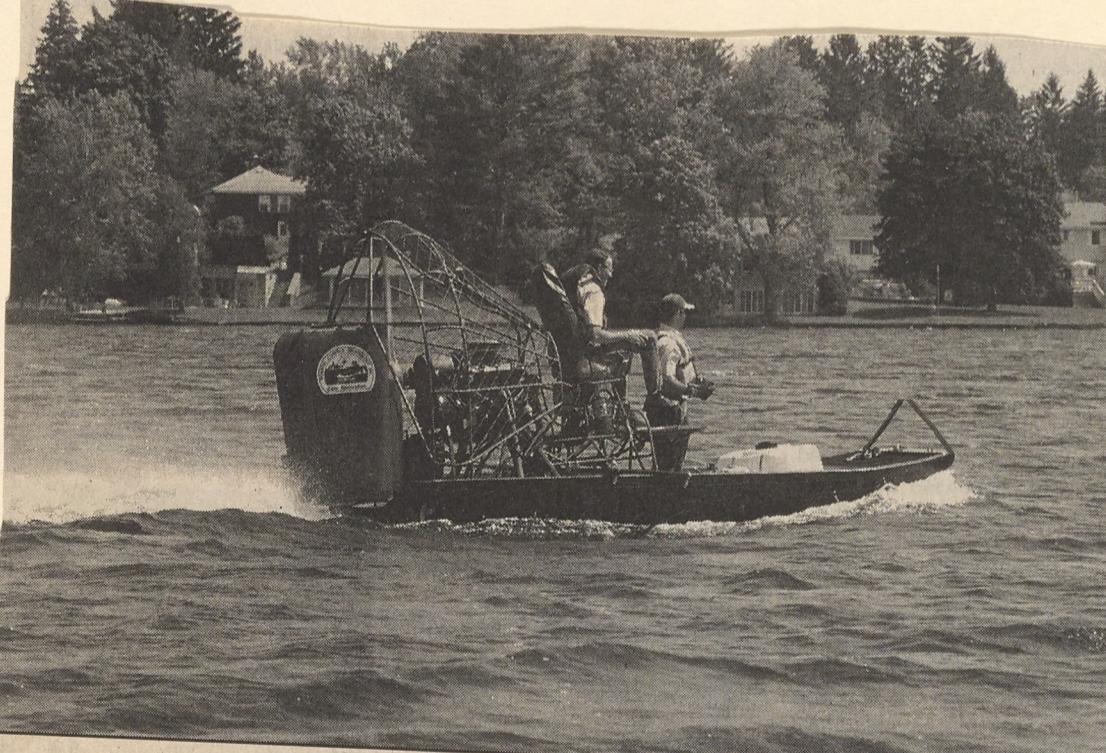
Later this summer, the Lake Onota Preservation Association will conduct a vegetation survey along transects and compare that with survey data collected before the treatment to see if Aquatic Control Technologies has met the 90 percent mark.

"It should be interesting," said Race.

Ironically, the biggest problem now is the lowered lake level brought on by the drought. Earlier this spring, the Conservation Commission denied an application by the city's contractor, Aquatic Control Technologies of Sutton, to draw the lake down 18 inches.

But even without the drawdown, the lake level is a foot below normal.

"So it's been a different kind of problem in places," he said.



Workers apply the first dose of the herbicide Sonar on Onota Lake earlier this summer.

Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Third herbicide application set for Onota Lake tomorrow

By Theo Stein
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Technicians from a Sutton-based lake management company will be returning to Onota Lake tomorrow to administer a third dose of the herbicide Sonar as part of a program to control Eurasian milfoil at the 617-acre waterbody.

Meanwhile, lake watchers say that the chemical treatment appears to be working. While the surface of nearby Pontoosuc Lake is pockmarked by large mats of weeds, Onota Lake is not.

"Last year at this time, you could have walked on the water in the North Cove and in parts of the South Basin," said Ward 7 Councilor Joseph O. Guzzo, whose ward includes the lake.

"By now the weeds would have grown to the surface of the water and they'd be laying over on top. There's a big difference. It's definitely working."

Robert S. Mellace, the city's

director of community services, said technicians from the city's contractor, Aquatic Control Technologies, were on the lake yesterday performing a weed inventory to assess the impact.

"They're expecting things to start showing more effects of the treatment over the next couple weeks," he said. "Some of the weed fragments looked a little on the healthy side to me at least. But the people who live on the lake and use the lake say that the weeds have not grown as profusely as they may have in past years by this date."

Guzzo said he hopped in a boat over the weekend and did see the predicted effects.

"The Eurasian milfoil is beginning to lay over and curly pond weed is beginning to turn milky white," he said. "So things are beginning to happen."

The scheduled third Sonar application tomorrow is part of the original application plan,

which remains in effect until Aug. 1.

The only restriction related to the herbicide treatment concerns the use of the water for irrigation of lawns and gardens, which remains in effect until Aug. 1.

The city parks director is asking people to stay away.

Mellace said. The initial June 1 application was followed up by a second, low-dose treatment three weeks ago.

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Guzzo said he hopped in a boat over the weekend and did see the predicted effects.

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Onota 80 percent clear

Lake's surface largely free of milfoil weeds

By D.R. Bahman

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Although they stopped short of declaring unilateral victory over Eurasian milfoil weeds in Onota Lake, members of a lake advocacy group are pleased with the results of applications of the herbicide Sonar.

A representative of Aquatic Control Technologies of Sutton, the contractor hired to attack the weeds in the 617-acre lake, told members of the Lake Onota Preservation Association at their annual meeting last week that the chemical appears to have been at least 80 percent effective.

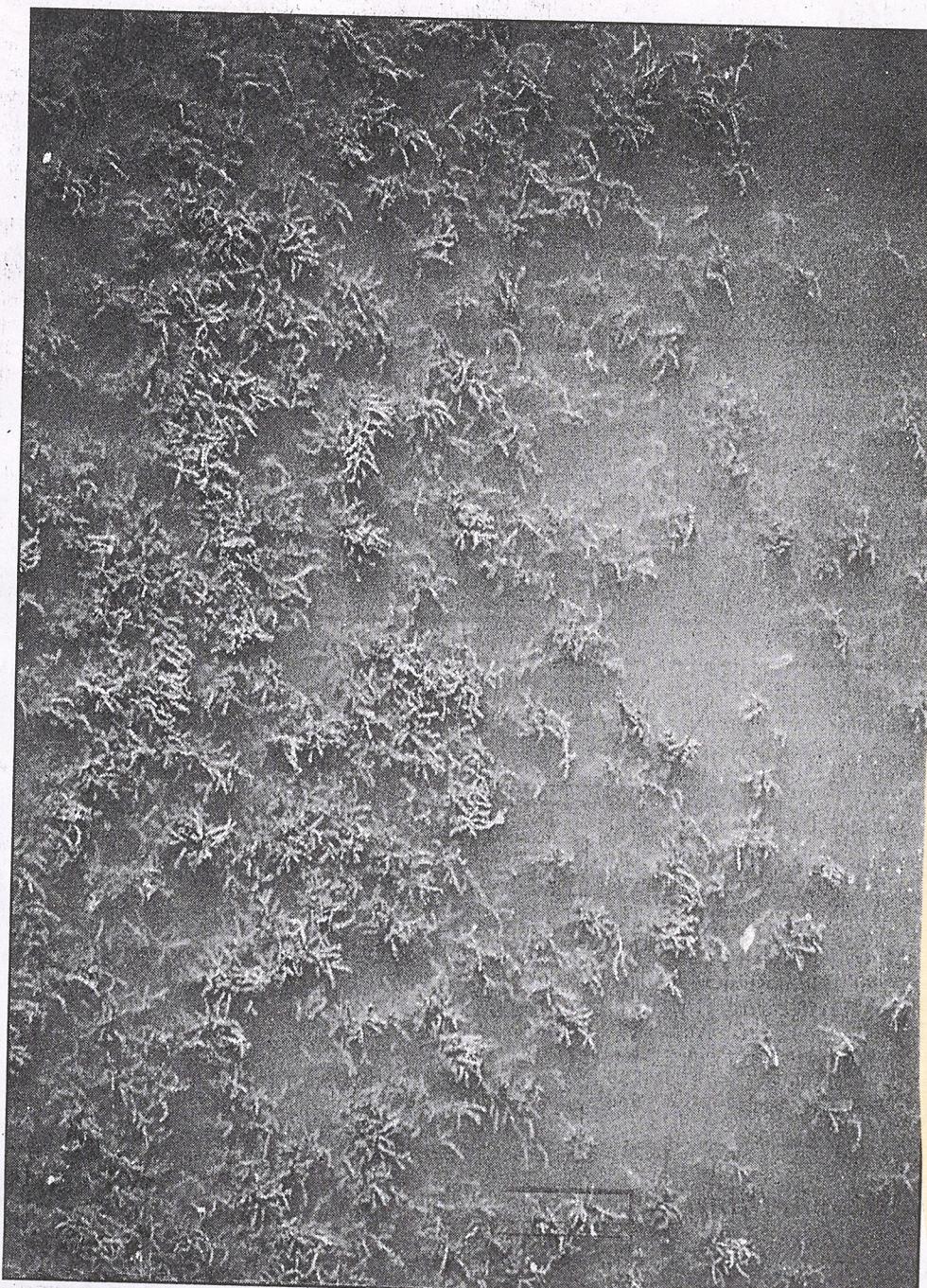
For the first time in years, members of the association said, the lake's surface has been free of weeds, allowing full use of Onota for boating, swimming and canoeing over the summer. Only last year, the weed infested 30 percent of 40 percent of the lake's total area.

Three applications

Sonar, which Aquatic Control Technologies representative Mark Bellaud said is "somewhat selective" for Eurasian milfoil when used at low doses, was applied to the lake three times: on June 1, June 17 and July 7. Aquatic Control Technologies estimates that over 50 days this summer, concentrations of Sonar in the lake hovered around five parts per billion, much lower than the maximum levels of between 30 and 40 ppb suggested by the manufacturer.

Eurasian milfoil weeds in the lake's north basin have been virtually eradicated, said Robert Race, president of the association. Indeed, said Race, "you've

ONOTA, continued on B5



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff
Lingered weeds, most of them below the surface, can be seen in this view of a shallow area of Onota Lake from a helicopter. The weeds appear larger and closer to the surface than they actually are because a telephoto lens was used.

Onota 10/25/99

cious: Even as it is dying, it sprouts green shoots.

Although another application of Sonar is "on the table" for next summer, there is no current plan to apply it in an effort to kill the remaining weeds, Bellaud said last week. That's because Sonar disperses too widely in water to make it an effective "spot treatment."

However, Sonar may be used if permits to employ another herbicide — 24-D — cannot be obtained, said Bellaud. He said that Sonar is granular and heavier than 24-D and that it kills the weeds' root system. Its "half life" in water is one to two weeks. It binds to sediment and remains for 30 to 60 days before becoming inert, Bellaud said.

Other options, which Bellaud characterized as "limited," include a late spring-early summer drawdown of the lake's level farther than the current allowed maximum of 18 inches, a return to mechanical harvesting of the weeds, and — over the long term — the release of weevils that devour Eurasian milfoil weeds.

Mechanical harvesting may worsen the problem, Bellaud said, because the weed reproduces from fragments released during harvesting.

In June, the city opted for the \$110,000 Sonar treatment as part of a long-term, three-phase effort to improve water quality in the raised great pond. It was the largest whole-lake treatment in the Northeast.

Last week, Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, said that the contract with Aquatic Control Technologies specifies a 90 percent reduction in the amount of milfoil. The company has been paid based on an 80 percent reduction, said Mellace.

Additional funds will be released "depending on the amount of control" the company demonstrates, he said.

Nevertheless, said Race, "we're pretty darn satisfied with the results that we got."



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife biologists believe that bacterial growth, not the herbicide Sonar, is responsible for killing fish in Onota Lake.

Heat blamed for fish kill at Onota Lake

By Theo Stein

Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — Fisheries biologists believe that a spell of hot weather, and not a recent chemical treatment, is what's killing fish at Onota Lake.

Robert S. Mellace, the city's director of community services, said parks workers were out along the lake yesterday picking up dead fish that had washed up along the shore of Onota Lake at Burbank Park.

Mellace estimated that the crews picked up between 75 and 100 fish, but a regular Onota fisherman put the number at more than 500.

Strong odor

Yesterday afternoon, the Burbank Park beach was relatively clean, though the air still held a strong odor of dead fish. Several yards away, some 40 sunfish, trout and bullheads were washed up and rotting in the wrack along the shore.

The fisherman, who asked to remain anonymous, said he'd been fishing Onota for 30 years. He suspected a June 1 application of the weed-killing chemical Sonar was responsible for the kill.

But a spokesman for the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife said the recent hot

6/10/99 FISH, continued on A5

Fish from A1

weather had likely caused a burst of bacterial growth that was responsible for the kill.

Sutton-based Aquatic Control Technologies applied the Sonar as part of a long-term city plan to control Eurasian milfoil and other nuisance weeds in the 617-acre lake.

During the permitting process, the DFW had expressed concerns about whether the whole-lake treatment would deplete oxygen levels in the lake, killing fish. Since the Sonar application on June 1, biologists have been getting up before dawn to verify that the levels of dissolved oxygen were sufficient to support aquatic life.

Mellace said he wasn't surprised to hear that the Sonar application was being blamed.

He added that he was at Pontoosuc Lake yesterday to look at that water body's milfoil problem. "There were dead fish in the weeds there, too," he said.

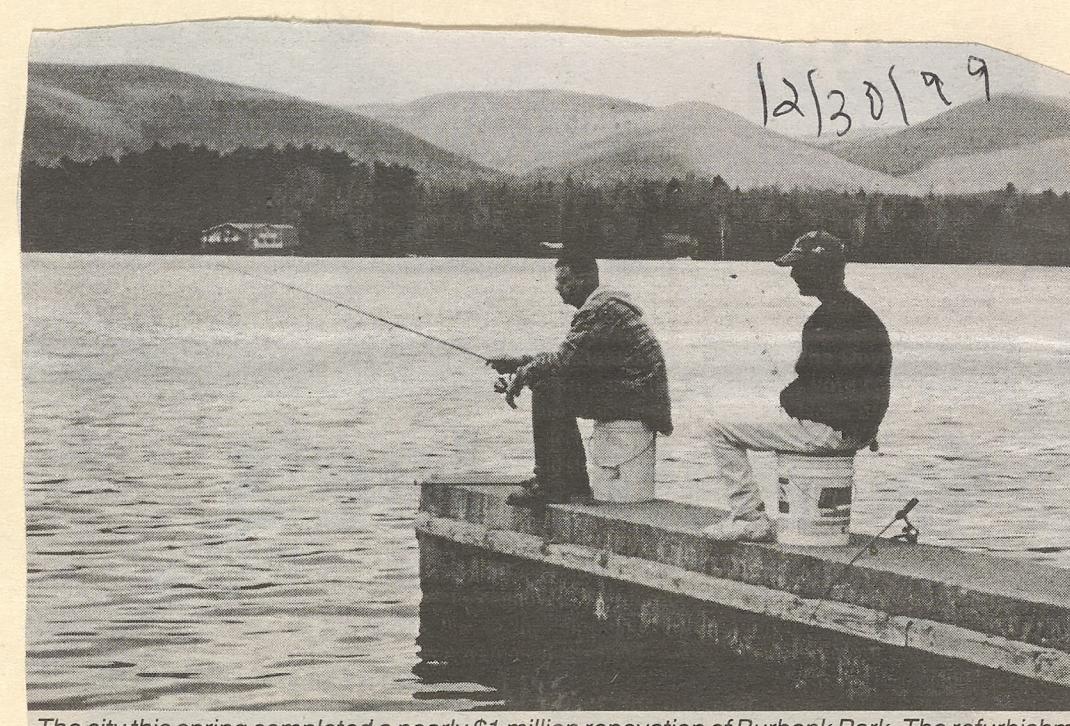
He also said he spoke with Aquatic Control Technologies President Gerald Smith about the fish kill.

"He told me that if you were to have a fish kill from Sonar, you'd be knee-deep in dead fish," Mellace said.

6/10/99



11/22/99
This is November?
John Dimise of Pittsfield and his daughter Molly, 4, ride though Burbank Park at Onota Lake yesterday. The temperature climbed to 60.



12/30/99
The city this spring completed a nearly \$1 million renovation of Burbank Park. The refurbishment included improvements to beaches, walkways, parking lots and boat ramps — with tentative plans for more enhancements.

Junior football registration Aug. 2-3

PITTSFIELD — Registration for the Pittsfield Junior Football League will take place on Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 2-3 between the hours of 5:30 and 8 p.m. at the Common Warming House on First Street.

The league is for ages eight through 13. All former players must register at this time. Players must obtain a medical waiver from a family physician in order to play in the junior league.

Each player will be assessed a \$15 registration equipment fee upon registration. Players must be accompanied by a parent or guardian during registration and new players must have a birth certificate.

For more information call 499-9343.

7/27/99

Pittsfield Junior Football tryouts set

PITTSFIELD — Tryouts for Pittsfield Junior Football will be held on Monday, Aug. 9, at 6 p.m. at the Common.

New candidates must attend at least half of the tryouts to be selected on a team. All new candidates will be placed on a team. Late registration will be taken before the tryouts on Monday.

The football season will run from Aug. 28 to Oct. 24. For more information contact Pittsfield Parks and Recreation at 499-9343.

8/4/99

Area Sports

Pittsfield junior football ticket drive

The Pittsfield Junior Football League will hold its annual season ticket sale on Saturday, August 21st at 10 a.m. from the Common Warming House on First Street.

All league players and coaches will participate in the door-to-door campaign. Players will be identified by their football jerseys.

Drivers are needed and all parents wishing to volunteer their help should report to the Common on First Street by 9:30 a.m. on Saturday.

League play opens on Saturday, August 28th at 10 a.m. for the B Division at the Common while the A Division opens on Sunday, August 29th at the Common.

8/17/99

The Pittsfield Gazette September 9 1999

Family of coaches

Lou & Christine Bologna are father-daughter Junior Football heroes

By Anthony Fyden

It is one of the first signs that fall is near in Pittsfield. The First Street Common teems with youngsters, clad in brightly-colored jerseys, pads and helmets.

The Junior Football League season has begun.

The Bologna family has been part of this local tradition for decades. Lou Bologna began coaching 32 years ago and Lou's daughter, Christine, has been a coach for nearly 16 years. But to Christine it feels like even longer — after all, even before she began officially coaching, she would be on the field with her father, "hang

The Pittsfield Gazette M.V.P.

Most Valuable Pittsfielders

ing on to his pantleg and trying to be a part of everything."

"I never was a 'sideline' type," Christine adds. "I like to be involved."

The Bologna's spend late summer and fall afternoons working with the young gridsters. They share a belief that the football program makes a difference in the lives of kids.

Christine Bologna is head coach of the "B" squad. It is a challenging role, but one which the coach relishes. "I love teaching the kids," she says. "They come here not knowing anything about football. I love working with them and molding them into football players."

Like any coach, Bologna first must earn the respect of her players. This usually does not take long, she reports. "Most of [the players] know I've been around for a long time," she said. "They see that I know what I'm talking about. I've never had a

problem with any kid at all."

Bologna energetically puts the young players through their paces and when she snaps out an order, they respond quickly. Her role is part teacher — most of the children have no football experience at all — and part motivational leader.

Bologna finds that she has to prove herself to the parents as well; some a little skeptical of a female coach. "The parents kind of test you," she said. "But I really don't mind that. They want the best for their kids; the best coach their kids can get—and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm glad that they're interested."

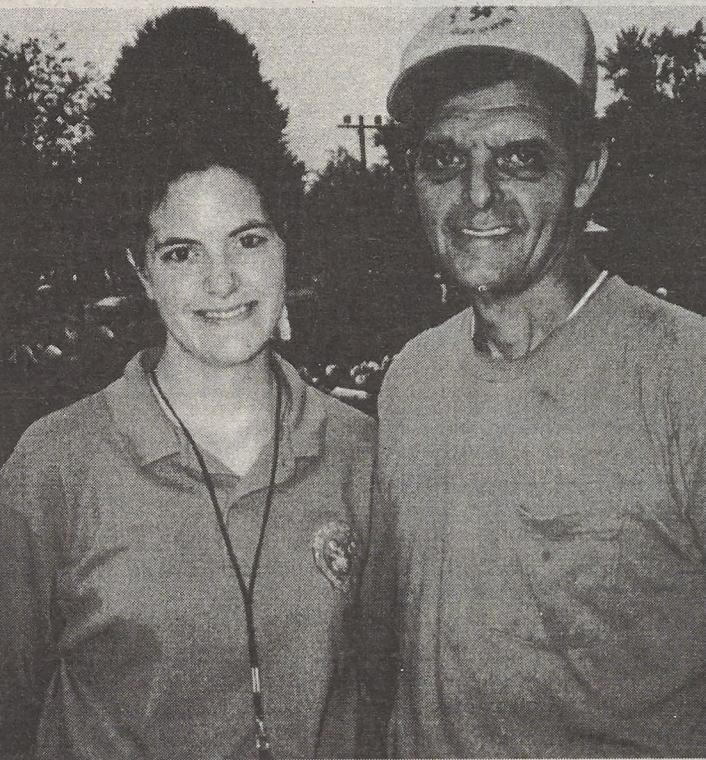
One of the biggest thrills of participating, Christine says, is watching the kids mature during the few months of football season — and not just in terms of football skills.

"It's not just a football thing," she said. "Some of these kids have really hard lives and they come out here and it really helps them. It really gives them self-esteem. You get to mold them into someone who is a leader."

And although the players and coaches sweat to improve football skills, the goal isn't all about winning. "It's about teaching them the basics and having fun," Christine Bologna says. "Mostly, it's about having fun."

In his years as a coach, Lou Bologna has watched many of his junior football charges go on to play high school and college sports. The program, he believes, can play a positive role. "You see them going from these little kids who can hardly pull on a helmet to being young men," he said.

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Coaching Junior Football is a tradition for Christine and Lou Bologna — they have nearly 50 years of coaching experience between them. Along with other coaches the father-daughter duo spends evenings teaching hundreds of Junior Leaguers the basics of football.

youngers make up the "B" squad. Although Christine Bologna spent a lot of time on the field as a youngster, she never played the game. Her two brothers, however, participated for years. Christine, who works as a warranty administrator for Pete's Chrysler, played softball throughout her school and college days. She earned a degree in psychology — which she says comes in handy in her coaching duties.

Lou Bologna, who works for Sampco, remembers playing junior football himself years ago. "I was out there in those blue uniforms," he said. "I played right through high school."

Although sponsored by the city's parks department, the Junior Football league is sustained by private donations. The registration fee for each child is just \$10 — which includes all equipment needed to play. The only additional cost to parents is the cost of a physical exam.

Organizers take particular pride in keeping the cost low — making the program available to all local families. League boosters hold bake sales, car washes and other events to raise enough money.

Christine Bologna believes that the program particularly benefits kids who come from poor or troubled families.

"They take out a lot of aggression on the field," she said. "I'd rather they get it out here than on the street."

Despite the growing number of sports options, the Junior League remains strong, Lou Bologna observes. "They come pouring down here every fall," he said.

The Berkshire Eagle, Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Brooks, Phillips have big games in junior grid play

PITTSFIELD — Big ground games were turned in by Jacob Brooks and Corey Phillips in Pittsfield Junior Football League action this past weekend.

Brooks scored on a 30-yard run in the first quarter and added a 15-yard running score in the third quarter to lead Scenic Screen to a 12-0 win over Pittsfield Police Union Browns in a B Division game.

On the defensive side of the ball, Joe Harrington and Bill Benoit were standouts for Pittsfield Police while Micah Stambovsky and Dave Heming were tough on defense for Scenic Screen.

In an A Division game, Phillips led the Berkshire Gas Browns to a 22-0 decision over Greylock Federal Credit Union. Phillips scored on runs of 32 yards and two yards and added a two-point conversion.

Jim LaPlante added a 15-yard run for the winners. Jonathan Stambovsky and Brandon Price were outstanding defensive players for Greylock while Justin McGuirt and Tim Nelligan hit hard for the Berkshire Gas defensive 11.

Elsewhere, the Italian-American Rams held off the Johnson Ford Giants, 6-0, in an B Division contest. Dustin Babbs went 38 yards with the pigskin to account for the lone score of the game.

The defense ruled for both teams with Bob Sykes and Joshua Stracener getting it done for the Giants and Brett Stimpson and Jonathan Howes rocking hard for the IAC Rams.

In the other A Division game played, the Tahiti Takeout Giants outscored Samel's Youth Association Rams 8-0.

Adam O'Brien lugged the leather in for six and Connor Ferris added the two-point conversion for the Giants, who had big defensive efforts from Nicholas Persson and Daniel Nolan.

The Bryan Conant and Tony Welker hit hard defensively for the Rams.

9/22/99

The Berkshire Eagle, Friday, October 1, 1999

Long runs highlight play in city junior grid league

PITTSFIELD — A pair of spectacular runs highlighted play this past weekend in the Pittsfield Junior Football League.

Michael Kimok broke off a 90-yard scoring run to help lead the Italian-American Club Rams to a 14-8 decision over the Scenic Screen Lions. Timothy Wager had an eight-yard scoring run for the winners while Michael Vickery added a two-point conversion.

Joshua Pavey went 100 yards for a score for the Lions with

Jeremy Dion adding the two-point conversion.

Lance King and Brandin Deangelis were defensive standouts for the Rams while Ricky Sabellico and Chris Penaherrera offered smothering defensive efforts for the Lions.

In other action, the Pittsfield Police Union IPB0 #447 Browns

blanked the Johnson Ford Giants 16-0.

Joseph Harrington went 43 yards for a score and Zachary Crosier 45 yards for a touchdown for the Browns. Crosier added a pair of two-point conversions.

Paul Procopio and Jacob Rand were defensive stars for the Browns. Dan Pravia and Robert Sykes played well defensively for the Giants.

In a tight game, the Greylock Federal Credit Union Lions held off Samel's Youth Association Rams 8-6. Jonathan Stambovsky's 22-yard touchdown run and a two-point conversion by Dan Evangelisto were the difference in the game. David Solis and Jonathan Brooks were the top defensive players for the winners.

The Rams scored on a pretty 41-yard pass and catch from quarterback Bryan Conant to J.R. Scales. Bryan Conant and Terrance Moore gave the Rams solid defensive play.

Also, the Berkshire Gas Browns took out the Tahiti Takeout Giants 14-0. Corey Phillips ran off an eight-yard run and Michael Connors added a one-yard scoring plunge to carry the Browns. Doug Starbird offered a two-point conversion. James LaPlante and Matt Powers were tough on defense for the winners.

For the Giants, Nicholas Persson and Derek Furrow played well defensively.

The Berkshire Eagle, Friday, October 8, 1999

Running backs shine in city youth grid play

PITTSFIELD — The NFL is currently without some of its top running backs due to injuries and retirement.

The Pittsfield Junior Football League, however, is boasting plenty of quality running backs this autumn. In play last weekend, Corey Phillips, Connor Ferris and Jacob Brooks used their cleats to tear up the turf, helping their respective teams to victories.

Phillips scored on runs of 47 and eight yards to lead the Berkshire Gas Browns to a 14-6 win over Samel's Youth Association Rams. Doug Starbird added a two-point conversion run for the winners.

Bryan Conant ran eight yards for the lone score for Samel's.

Defensively, Clarence Gunn and Tim Nelligan were defensive standouts for Berkshire Gas. Samel's, meanwhile, had strong defensive efforts from Andrew Mandell and Tony Welker.

Ferris leads Giants

Ferris helped the Tahiti Takeout Giants to a 20-14 victory against the Greylock Federal Credit Union Lions. The talented back accounted for all the points with runs of 15, five and two yards. He also added a two-point conversion rush.

Greylock spread the wealth, receiving scoring runs from Sami Conroy (41 yards), Jonathan Stambovsky (26 yards) and Dan Evangelisto (two-point conversion). Stambovsky added a two-point rush.

Matt Chappell and Nicholas Persson were tough defensive players for Tahiti while Paul Gillis and Nicholas Persson were defensive standouts for Greylock.

Brooks led the Scenic Screen Lions past the Johnson Ford Giants 26-6. Matt Weller scored from one-yard out for one Giants' score with Weller connecting through the air to Derick Belford on a 22-yard play for the second score.

Corey Phillips' five-yard run accounted for the Browns' touchdown.

On defense, Dan Letourneau and Justin McGuirt led the Browns while Dan Nolan and Weller were keys to the Giants on defense for the Giants.

The Greylock Federal Credit Union Lions used a four-yard touchdown score from Jonathan Stambovsky to defeat the Samel's Youth Association Rams, 6-0. David Solis and Jerome Egerton played well defensively for the Lions while J.R. Scales and Terrance Moore were tough defensively for the Browns.

The Berkshire Eagle, Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Junior football games feature tough defense

PITTSFIELD — Defense ruled in three of the four games played last weekend in the Pittsfield Junior Football League. Big plays, however, highlighted action in the other game.

The Italian-American Club Rams defeated the Scenic Screen Lions, 26-6. Big plays for the winners were turned in by Dustin Babbs, who raced 52 yards for a touchdown and added a two-point conversion. The Rams also had big plays from James Avallon, who had a 59-yard run and Jonathan Howes, who had scoring runs of 25 and two yards.

Jacob Brooks put the Lions on the board with a run of 35 yards.

The Rams were led defensively by Eric Parisi and Brett Stimpson while Micah Stambovsky and Jacob Brooks excelled defensively for the Lions.

Elsewhere, the Pittsfield Police Union Browns put the brakes on the Johnson Ford Giants 16-0.

In a defensive battle, the Pittsfield Police Union Browns and the Italian American Club Rams engaged in a 6-6 deadlock.

Paul Procopio went 25 yards for the Browns' score while Dustin Babbs scooted 70 yards for the Rams.

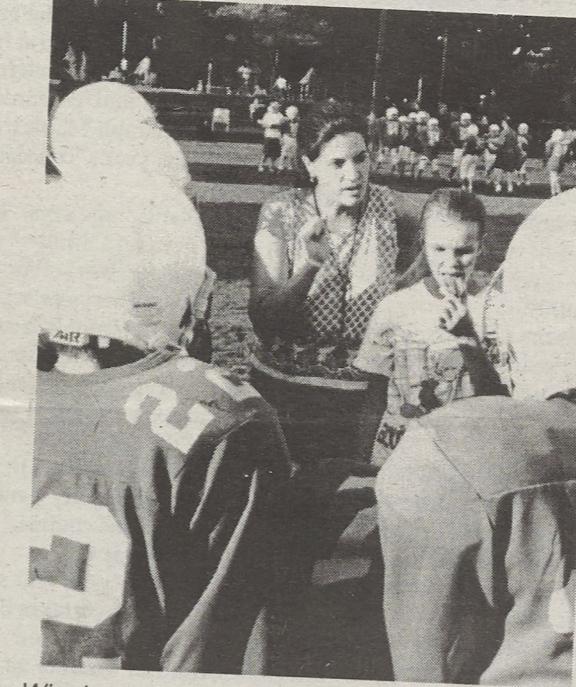
Thomas Prendergast and William Benoit were outstanding defensively for the Browns while Jonathan Howes and Timothy Wager led the defensive charge for the Rams.

Gridiron Dreams

Junior Football League players have begun preparing for the 1999 season.



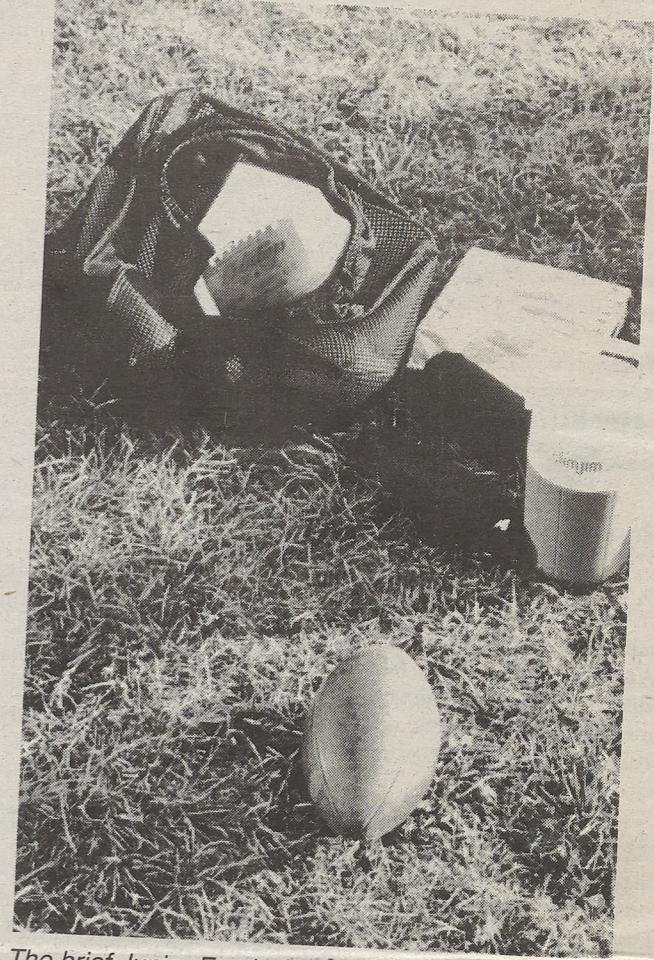
Pittsfield Junior Football League players convene en masse weeknights to practice at the First Street Common.



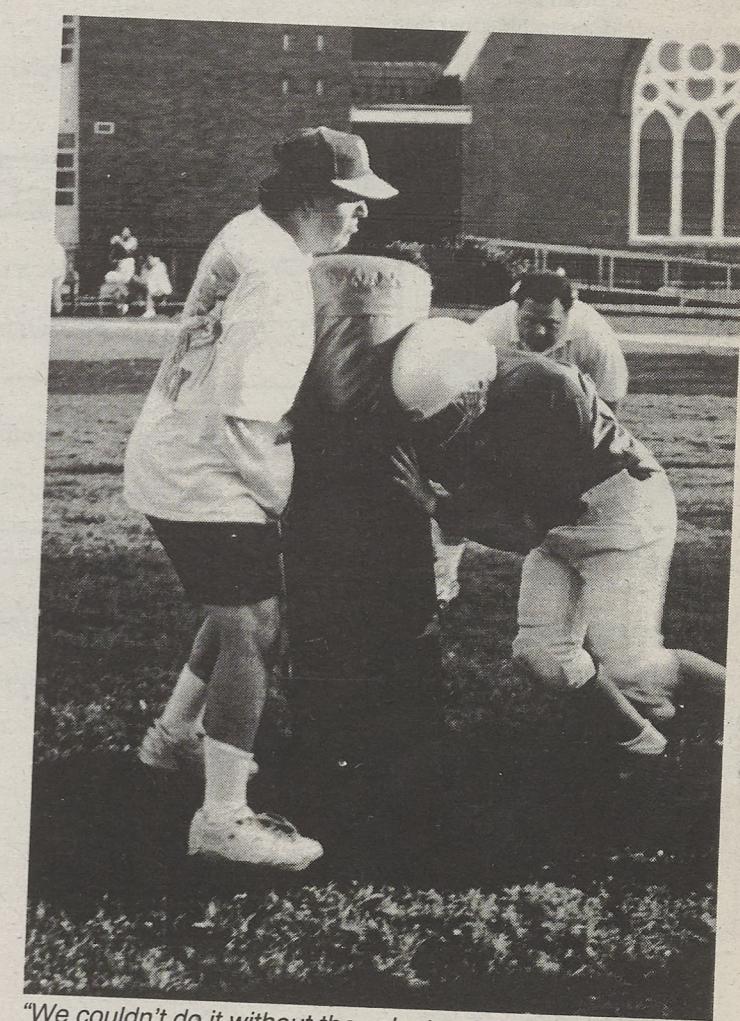
Winning is fun, but Junior Football coaches emphasize the importance of technique and safety.



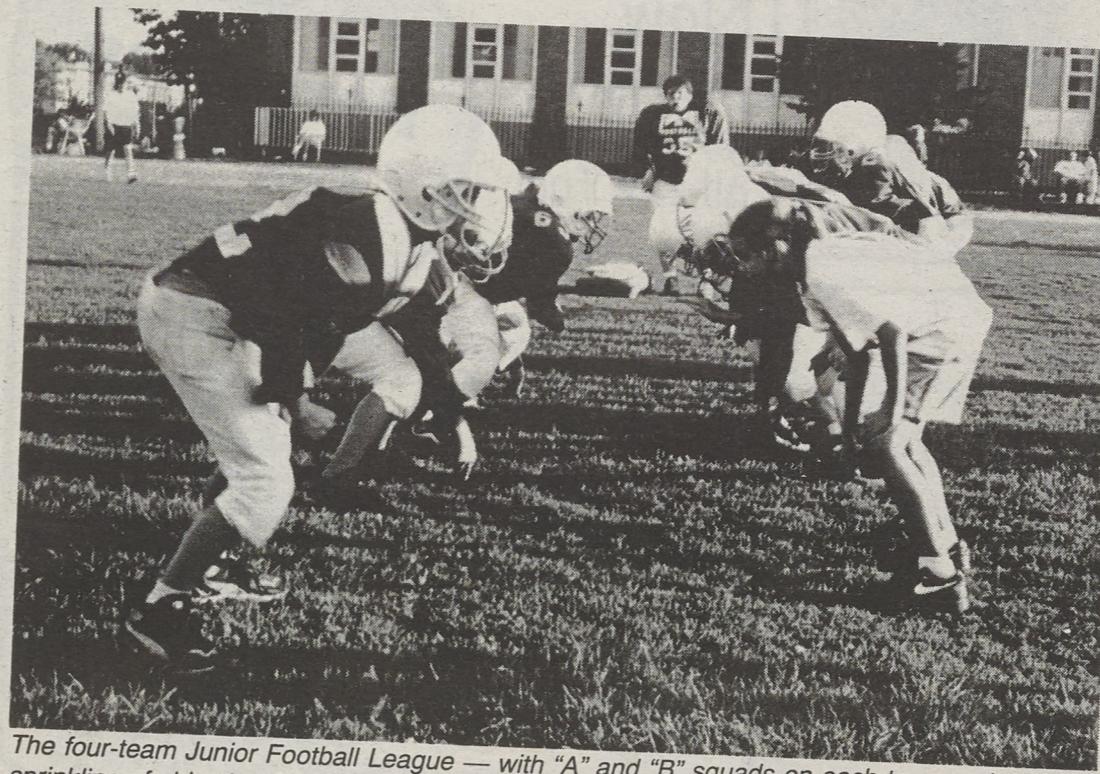
All players must properly stretch before practicing.



The brief Junior Football League season opens with games September 11 & 12 at the First Street Common. The league switches to Wahconah Park later in the fall.



"We couldn't do it without the volunteers," says longtime city recreation director John Marchesi. "Most of the guys have been here for years."



The four-team Junior Football League — with "A" and "B" squads on each team — includes a sprinkling of girls, though most are expected to bow out when full contact practices commence.

